

THE ETHICAL SYSTEM

OF

JAMES MARTINEAU

BY

JOSEPH H. HERTZ, A. B.

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE

UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

COLUMBIA COLLEGE

NEW YORK

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TO MY MOTHER

קִמּוּ בְנֵיהָ וְיִאֲשְׁרוּהָ

“Her sons rise up and call her blessed.”

From the Song of the Valorous Woman—*Proverbs xxxi. 28.*

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I

METHOD IN ETHICS: MARTINEAU AND ENGLISH INTUITIONISM

In the first two sections of this paper, I shall attempt to consider Martineau's ethical system as a whole, its method and its distinguishing features. I shall also attempt to trace most or even all of these features to earlier systems in the history of ethical thought.

The work before me, the *Types of Ethical Theory*,¹ is an attempt at a Psychological Ethics. This term seems to imply that there is also another ethics—an ethical ethics, we might say. In what consists the difference between the two? That will depend upon our conception of the method of ethics; and this in turn upon our conception of ethics either as a science or as an art.

Without entering either into an exhaustive or original presentation of this much-vexed question, we may say that ethics is both a science and an art.² As a science, it endeavors to explain something; as an art, to realize some-

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory* (3d ed. revised), Vol. II., Book I., Idiopsychological Ethics.

² See especially J. H. Hyslop, *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. I., p. 404, on Functions of Ethical Theory, where most of these distinctions are drawn.

thing. As a science, it may either classify, or explain by causes. In the former case, it takes up the ethical phenomena, and regards them as objects, furnished by consciousness; our knowledge of these objects being derived from descriptive and explanatory psychology. It will collect them, classify them by reducing them into a list of virtues or table of duties to friends, humanity, etc.; or it may find the ground-idea or ideas, metaphysical or otherwise, of which they are differentiated manifestations.

While if we regard ethical phenomena as events, and therefore extend the domain of the study of ethics (as a science) so far as even to include explanation by causes, we have to investigate the origin or history of moral phenomena. That is, we make comparative psychological researches, historical studies of the development of ethnic conceptions, customs, etc. Just as an anatomist or physiologist, in addition to analyzing and describing the various organs and functions of the human body, may resort to Comparative Zoölogy or Morphology, for more ultimate "explanations." The two studies, Ethics and the Human Body, differing however in this: that "the natural history of morals can hardly be written, as there is no fossil, pre-human morality. Accordingly, the scientific moralist, instead of roaming comprehensively over the fields of animal life, must brood intensively at the altar-fires of the human heart."¹ Properly speaking, this does not belong to the study of ethics as generally understood. Even "if ethical science does show that the family and the morality of the family have had an historical growth, and that they vary with times and places, it does not thereby really derogate from their sanctity and authority within a civilization that has once absorbed them. Science, indeed, can tell us nothing of the validity of virtue, duty or good. And if speculation in the guise of moral

¹ Schurman, *Ethical Import of Darwinism*, pp. 28-30.

philosophy takes up the problem, it will find that the most domestic virtues have the same warrant as justice or benevolence—that warrant being in the last analysis, an inexpugnable consciousness of their right to us and authority over us.”¹ Besides, validity is not so inextricably dependent upon origin as is popularly believed. The implied assumption being that the “late” development of moral intuition is a decisive argument against its validity. “Indeed,” says Sidgwick, “such a line of reasoning would be suicidal; as the cognition that the moral faculty is developed, is certainly later in development than moral cognition, and would, therefore, by this reasoning be less trustworthy.”²

While as an art ethics assumes ideas or conceptions and works progressively towards ends—the end in this case, according to Martineau, being “intrinsic—complete for the moment in simple compliance with its own law; it is almost indefinite in its range, being nothing less than a perfection eternally in advance of the will. To define this ideal of the conscience would be the business of ethics [as an art], did it not as infinite transcend definition.” This is not altogether in Martineau’s usual strain. The trace or influence of the Hegelian Perfectionism, as expounded by T. H. Green, is to be noticed in this passage. In more simple form, Ethics or Practical Ethics asks which rules of life are applicable to the various problems that present themselves in human activity.

Therefore, narrowing ourselves down, ethics both as a science and an art is occupied solely with *ends*, and never with the investigation of causes. As a science it aims to ascertain the nature of the moral faculty. It aims to show the general conception which will reduce the multiplex phenomena *actually* governing human conduct to unity.

¹ Schurman, *Ethical Import of Darwinism*, p. 364.

² Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, p. 212.

Ethics is here classificatory. It furthermore endeavors to ascertain the *summum bonum*, the end that ought ideally to govern conduct. To illustrate from the work under consideration. We are given a psychological order of impulses,—so far the theoretic-explanatory portion; but we are also given the moral order of impulses, the order that ought to exist in the moral being—this is the theoretic-legislative or casuistic portion of the science. To take the example of Medicine, though we are not sure that it exactly covers our case. As a science it first describes the human being as he is *now* in Anatomy, Physiology, etc. Secondly, as a science, it aims also to help along the action of the human body towards perfect development, remove dangers, heal diseases. It is thus both explanatory and legislative. Ethics as a science, therefore, presents a system of truths just as much as theoretic medicine. But it is also an art, with a “practical” end in view. It is also a system of rules, which must not alone satisfy the understanding, but move the *will*, i. e., have motive efficiency. Now as the theoretic legislative portion of ethics coincides in area with the practical portion, an ethical theory must possess, at the same time, truth and power to influence the will. To make these two ends meet is the task (and some say, hopeless task) of the ethical philosopher. Ethical systems there have been that apparently, for a time at least, satisfied all speculative demands. But they at best resembled Pygmalion’s statue, that though wakened into life out of the cold marble from which it was hewn, never bore any children. “Morality, however pure and elevated” says the leading English Positivist, “must always remain a somewhat tepid and prosaic stimulus when contrasted with the whirlwind of passion. It is certain that man’s benevolent instincts never reach the red heat of lust and hate. History shows us one force and one force only, which is strong enough to overmaster the sting of appetite.

The white heat of religious enthusiasm has proved stronger than the red heat of selfish desire. And nothing else in the history of mankind has done so."¹ But unfortunately again, these do not always satisfy man's speculative needs.

Ethics as an art must therefore supply motives for ethical conduct, using the word motive in the widest sense so as to include all schools. It must offer a satisfactory answer to the question so frequently asked; "Why should I do what I see to be right?" not by referring to another wider fact, which in turn needs motivation like the elephantine support of the earth in the Hindu legend; but an answer of the Practical Reason that will contain a predominant inclination to do the action, all non-rational desires notwithstanding. The art of ethics would also include the application of the truths of theoretic ethics in practical life, to decide casuistic cases, to determine the moral admissibility or non-admissibility of certain problems. Furthermore, in its scope it includes "educational" ethics, the schooling in the practice of morals: how to strengthen the will; how to weaken the passions; how to develop the moral instinct in children. As an example of this last portion of ethical inquiry, which is woefully neglected, and in regard to which there exists the greatest uncertainty and a most deplorable confusion of thought, we may cite the wonderful section in William James' *Principles of Psychology* entitled, the "Ethical and Pedagogical Importance of the Principle of Habit." In short, ethics as an art would also include hortatory ethics and applied ethical psychology.

From these accounts of ethics as a science and an art, it will be evident that the methods in ethics will vary according as one or other of the above meanings predominates; or according as they are sufficiently welded together in the author's mind so as all to point to the fact that ethics both as a science and as an art is occupied solely with ends.

¹ Frederic Harrison, *International Journal of Ethics*, IV: 338.

What is Martineau's conception of ethics? Does the method he employs correspond to his view? "The metaphysicians untrained in habits of cautious induction intent on pushing some one favorite principle by the infinitely fine insinuations of analysis through all the intricacies of thought and will," overshoot the mark of ethical investigation. Morality is not a system of truths, but a system of rules. It is an art.¹ Every ethical decision being as we have seen a *preferential* one, we cannot speak of conscience as a sense, for sense does not discern its objects in pairs; nor as reason, which sees things only as true or false without any degree of comparison. Butler, he tells us, approaches this view. But he has a uniform postponement of all sorts of natural good to one and the same moral good. One of the terms is constant in comparison: virtue rather than affection; virtue rather than resentment, etc. Butler's scheme is an absolute monarchy over equal subjects; his, a natural aristocracy among our principles of conduct. This consciousness of the preferential worth among the springs of action is the psychological fact which is the ground of all our moral phenomena. The first part of his method—the ascent to the definition: Every action is right which in presence of a lower principle follows a higher, or *vice versa*—pursues an *a posteriori* road; the latter part is an *a priori* deduction of consequences from an assumed law.

Judging by the above, we would, therefore, classify Martineau's presentation as a *scientific* one. The philosophy of morality, the theory of the sentiments of right and wrong, is a psychological study; it is an examination of the procedure of the human conscience, when judging the springs of action and their result.² The assignment of the moral order to the springs of action is the theoretic-legislative portion of his

¹ Martineau, *Essays*, Vol. III, p. 347, "Whewell's Morality."

² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, "Whewell's Morality."

work. And were it not for the fact that he changes these truths arrived at into imperatives: "Follow the higher in presence of the lower," and that he gives an account, indefinite though it be, of Reverence and Moral Authority as answers to the question "Why must I do what is right?" we could not from this treatment judge ethics to be an art. Although in the preface he claims it to be such, he has no practical-legislative portion in his work.

His method is, therefore, the inductive. Spencer looks for his data of ethics in outward nature; Martineau in the psychic domain: the one producing a physical, the other a psychological ethics.

I shall now examine the influences, historical or otherwise, that will further explain this peculiar conception of ethics, as to method or otherwise, given by our author. To this end we will compare him with those of his predecessors that obviously left a trace upon him. In the first place we will examine, in brief, some of the English ethical writers down to the middle of the last century.

Early English Intuitionism

Modern ethics in England is empirical in method; while on the continent it is as a rule metaphysical. As a direct result of Bacon's teachings we notice among the other characteristics of the post-Baconian development in ethical thought, its secularization, its complete divorcement from metaphysical discussions, and the attempt to determine the psychological basis of moral action.¹ Hobbes is the first to apply these principles, and he gives us a most ingenious psychological derivation of all morality from self-love. As his enemies wish to defeat him with his own weapons, the psychological method prevails in Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hartley, Adam Smith and Hume; and as we shall have

¹ Wundt, *Ethik*, S. 269.

occasion to see more in detail, in the Scottish School. Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Butler agree in maintaining against Hobbes that benevolence and conscience are natural springs of action, distinct from self-love; while in Hume, Hartley and Adam Smith, the chief concern is the explanation of the moral sentiments.

Shaftesbury

Shaftesbury's was an age of Individualism, *par excellence*. The philosophy of the times was monadistic. He therefore gives us a table of the springs of action. Martineau, in his excellent account of Shaftesbury, proves that he is not as hopelessly aesthetic in his moral theory as is commonly believed. He is merely found to say: that the right is always beautiful, but not that it is the beautiful which constitutes the right. Shaftesbury possesses the following distinctively moral features. He asserts the intuitive and universal apprehension of right and wrong, with the inherent knowledge of obligation. He expressly distinguishes the inward approval of the right course from the impulsive "liking" for it. He draws his support from psychological observation. He perceives that the interior springs are the sole objects of ethical judgment. He discerns among them an order to which a "*proportionate*" affection is due. This order he regards as intuitively known as soon as reflection is turned upon the several springs of action.

These points, though not elaborated by him, offer most remarkable resemblances to Martineau's theory. We will now see what Butler's share is in the spiritual development of the author of the *Types of Ethical Theory*.

Butler

According to Butler, the moral faculties comprise four classes of principles. I. Certain propensions, aversions,

passions and affections; 2. Self-love; 3. Principle of benevolence, and 4. Conscience. Butler conceives human nature not to be composed of a number of impulses, balanced against each other, but a system in which some perform a regulative function over others. Self-love and conscience are those regulative principles. In case of conflict between the two, Butler seems to accord the supremacy to conscience. Although for the most part he is at great pains to prove that conscience prompts to conduct *harmonious* though distinct from self-love, that is but an unfortunate concession to the materialistic tendencies of the age. He, at the same time, indignantly repudiates the implication that the goodness of actions depends upon their consequences. Conscience is an absolute guide. "Had it strength as it has right, had it power as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world."

Martineau adopted the hierarchy of impulses, the regulative principles and the supremacy of conscience. Neither will we find it hard to recognize in Butler's account prototypes of the Canons of Character and of Consequence.

Hutcheson

Like Butler, Hutcheson emphasizes the "regulating and controlling function" of the moral sense. Moral judgment is also entirely uninfluenced by considerations of the advantageous or disadvantageous results accruing therefrom. A motive to action is always an impulse. He furthermore distinguishes turbulent passions from the calm affections which appear *only after cognition*. The last, it will be seen, is nothing else than, in embryo, Martineau's distinction between primary impulses and their secondaries, the latter making their appearance on a self-conscious stage only. Hutcheson recognizes that the springs of action have in themselves their differences of worth, so that there is an

intensive order of right before coming to the extensive. "There is a plain graduation in the objects of our approbation and condemnation, from the indifferent actions ascending to the highest virtue or descending to the lowest vice."¹ The recognition of this truth, which lands him right at the door of Martineau's graduated scale, is not turned into any use. "It is not easy to settle exactly the several intermediate steps in due order; but the highest and lowest are manifest"—selfish and generous desire. He looks for virtue in the *action* as a whole without distinction of its inward source, its immediate execution, or its ulterior consequences—a bold, but we are sorry to see, an undeveloped evasion of all one-sided Intuitionism as well as of one-sided Utilitarianism.

II

MARTINEAU, THE SCOTTISH SCHOOL, AND KANT

The consideration of Hutcheson brings us to the Scottish School, of which he is sometimes considered the founder. The principles of this school, as stated by Dr. McCosh, are almost identical with the fundamental metaphysical assumptions of Martineau. The members of this school hold that the self is the chief object of study. They proceed throughout by observation, as the laws of mind can be discovered only by internal observation. They have therefore commonly begun the treatment of Moral Philosophy with an inquiry as to the Impulses of our nature, called by them Active Powers. They furthermore hold that consciousness, the internal sense, is as much to be trusted as the external sense. Just as by the reports of the latter we are given a natural

¹ Hutcheson, *System of Moral Philosophy*, I., iv., p. 64, quoted by Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 561.

philosophy, we can construct a mental philosophy or a moral philosophy, as the case may be, out of the facts furnished by the other sense.

Reid

Reid, like Dr. Price before him and Dugald Stewart after him, holds that merit depends on the formal rightness of an act. No act can be morally good in which regard for what is right has not *some* influence. He classifies the impulses into rational and non-rational. The non-rational he again subdivides into *mechanical* instincts and habits, operating "without will," intention or thought, and *animal* impulses, which operate upon the will without any exercise of reason towards determining their ends, *i. e.*, the appetites, desires and affections. The moral faculty is "rational and active." Regard for one's self and the sense of duty are co-ordinate rational principles. He does not construct a scientific scheme. "In order to know what is right and what is wrong in human conduct, we need only listen to the dictates of conscience, when the mind is calm and unruffled."

Among the few propositions that are no sooner understood than they are believed, that are not learned by inference or deduction from some other, the Scottish School holds Free Will to be an absolutely indispensable point in ethical doctrine. Reid, like Martineau, holds in his argument for Free Will the competition to consist between an "animal motive" of greatest strength impelling in one way, while a "rational" motive of greatest worth impels towards another end. Although more effort is required to resist than to yield, we have at that moment a conviction that it depends upon us in relation to them which of them we follow. Again, the germ of Martineau's rule concerning Merit and Demerit will be recognized in the following account of Reid's. He notices the varying degrees of responsibility recognized in common

moral judgments. An irresistible motive is generally admitted to take away guilt; and we commonly judge that the criminality of mischievous acts is materially diminished when done under the influence of violent passion or alarm. There is a profound difference in our judgment of a man who betrays a State secret for a bribe and one who betrays it on the rack. Or in other words, *Where the discrepancy is greatest between the moral and the prudential order of impulses, the guilt is least; where the discrepancy is least, the sin is greatest.*

Stewart

Dugald Stewart's *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man* is the fullest and most systematic account of ethics that the Scottish School has given us. His is the system that has exercised, as we shall soon see, a most overshadowing influence over Martineau. Just as Stewart's system is only a careful compilation, with some important and highly original modifications, of the Intuitionism current with Butler, Price and Reid, on the Scottish standpoint, so Martineau's is only Stewart's system brought "up to date," interspersed with parenthetical polemical sallies against the current evolutionistic utilitarianism, and the whole cast into a semi-Kantian mould. Martineau distinctly tells us that his own psychological classification is only Stewart's over again with some slight variations. To exhibit Martineau's indebtedness to the English ethical thought of the past more plainly, and thus afford the best clue to his proper understanding and appreciation, how far he has left undone the things which he ought to have done, and has done those things which he ought not to have done, we will examine Stewart in detail.

Stewart¹ gives the following classification and analysis of

¹ Dugald Stewart, *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man*, (Ed. Hamilton,) Vol. VI, p. 121, ff.

the most important principles of action. *a.* Appetites (hunger, thirst and sex). *b.* Desires (curiosity, society, esteem, ambition, emulation). *c.* Affections (kindred, friendship, patriotism, piety, resentment, etc.). These three classes are the *instinctive* or implanted propensities—those which urge man by blind and instinctive impulse to their respective objects. *d.* Self-love, and *e.* Moral faculty, constitute the *rational* or governing principles of actions—active principles originating in man's rational nature. The moral faculty is an original principle not resolvable into any other principle more general. Like Reid he holds that this moral faculty is not "innate" except in germ; it stands in need of education, exercise and habit. A man, for example, brought up from the moment of his birth in utter darkness, can form no conception of light and colors. "But would it not be rash to conclude that the sense of seeing is not an original part of the human frame?"¹ The apparent diversity among mankind in their moral judgments is explainable by three causes. 1. Different situations—climates, civilization. 2. Diversity of speculative opinion. 3. Different moral import of the same action under different systems of external behavior.

The *analysis of our moral faculty*.² The science of ethics has been divided into two parts. The scope of the former is to ascertain the origin of our moral ideas; by what *principle* of our constitution we are led to form the notion of moral distinctions. The scope of the second is to refer the phenomena of moral perception to their most simple and general laws. We will here reproduce the former only—the analysis of moral perception.³ 1. The perception that the act is right or wrong. This is so plain and evident that in reference to those who claim the factitious origin of moral

¹ *Active and Moral Powers*, p. 231.

² *Ibid.*, p. 276.

³ *Ibid.*, 280, ff.

ideas, he quotes approvingly the words of the prophet: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness."¹ 2. An emotion of pleasure or pain. It is impossible to behold a good action without being conscious of a benevolent affection either of love or of respect towards the agent. Besides this, other agreeable feelings, peace of mind, for instance, come in process of time to be associated with the general idea of virtuous conduct. This may have suggested to Martineau to introduce Reverence in one of its phases as accompanying each superior spring in its conflict with a lower. 3. Perception of Merit and Demerit. Unlike Martineau, he attempts a definition of Merit. "The various actions performed by other men, not only excite in our minds a benevolent affection towards them, but we feel ourselves called upon to make their worth known to the world."

From the above account we see that the analysis Stewart gives of moral perception almost coincides with the development of the "Fundamental Ethical Fact" in the first 128 pages of the second volume of the *Types of Ethical Theory*. Any further elucidation on their similarity is unnecessary. Even Martineau's favorite appeal to children displaying moral feelings before they have attained the age of egoistic endeavor, is repeatedly urged by Dugald Stewart. "In the early period of life our moral judgments make their appearance long before children are able to form the general notion of happiness, and indeed in the infancy of the reason." Stewart's definitions of obligation, moral authority, etc., are in every way just as circular, or tautological, as Martineau's. Look for a moment at Stewart's explanation of moral authority. "It is absurd to ask why we are bound to practice virtue; the very notion of virtue implies the notion of obligation." Is not Wundt justified in claiming that Intuitionism

¹ Isaiah, v: 20.

in settling this vital point in the moral problem by a superficial assertion of its immediateness, really takes for granted the very points that it is the business of ethics to explain. The mere circumstance that these intuitionists must eventually assume a heteronomous Moral Law of unknown origin and nature, is an indirect proof that the basis of individualistic Ethics in general, and Intuitionism in particular, is an unsatisfactory one.¹

Whewell

According to the cumulative testimony of such good critics as John S. Mill, Martineau and Friedrich Jodl, Intuitive Morality reaches an almost absurd development in Whewell, the Kantian.² For our purpose we will merely note that Whewell follows Kant in rejecting self-love as an independent rational and governing principle, which almost all his predecessors have been inclined—or rather not disinclined—to hold as such. He consequently refuses to admit happiness apart from duty as a reasonable end of action. The moral reason is thus left as sole monarch of all it surveys in the ethical field. Martineau in admitting the Canon of Rationality to round out his system when the question as to the *means* of an action is left open, and thus modifying prudence by the co-existing moral judgment, partially returns to the position of Butler and Reid.

Our examination of the Scottish School is now at an end. We have seen that each has attempted an arranged order of impulses, all of them more or less artificial. Dr. Martineau, enabled to profit by their example, himself admits that his, the latest and therefore presumably the best, is “merely tentative.” Waiving, for the moment, the value of any *moral*

¹ Wundt, *Ethik*, s. 349.

² J. S. Mill, *Dissertations*, II, 450. Martineau, *Essays*, III. Jodl, *Geschichte der Ethik*, II, 416.

order of impulses, as Dr. Martineau's scale, are the various attempts at a psychological order, from Plato to Malebranche, from Hutcheson to Martineau, of any lasting value? Let Mr. Leslie Stephen answer the question for us. "Man is a complex of numerous passions, a little hierarchy of conflicting, co-operating, mutually interactive emotions which it is simply impossible to tabulate and measure. Numerous classifications have been made by acute observers. Yet I do not suppose that any of these can be regarded as more than a rough account of the most obvious facts. To ask which are the primitive and elementary passions, how they are related and how the derivative passions are compounded, is to ask questions which admit of no positive answer. We are simply feeling about in the dark, putting rough guesses into pretentious shapes, or dressing poetical symbols in the language of science. But we are far indeed from anything which can for a moment deserve our confidence as scientific analysis."¹

Kant

It would be altogether unreasonable to expect a complete presentation of the intricate course of reasoning by which Kant establishes Morality. We can only touch here a point and there a point, to illustrate, by analogy or contrast, Martineau's view.

Moral consciousness, according to Kant, possesses greater certainty than the speculative reason. The Practical Reason takes the form of the Categorical Imperative, bringing into view at once the affirmative and obligatory character of morality. Martineau sees no necessity for such a fundamental division of the human reason, when Kant himself states "that it is inexplicable how Pure Reason can also be Practical." The perception of morality is just as simple and just

¹ Stephen, *Science of Ethics*, p. 15.

as mysterious, and *no more*, than the perception of external reality. While both Kant and the Scottish School (or Martineau) hold that morality is the *ratio cognoscendi* of Freedom, Kant goes so far as to claim that Freedom is the *ratio essendi* of morality. And right here it may not be out of place to note the different conceptions that Kant and Martineau respectively hold concerning the Freedom of the Will. Kant lays all the stress in the argument on the consciousness of duty and desert. Not so Martineau. He still practically occupies the standpoint of Reid. In his *Study of Religion*,¹ where the question of Free Will is discussed at great length, he regrets that freedom, in the sense of option, and will, as the power of deciding an alternative, have no place in Kant's view. "The unconditional mandate of right postulates not the freedom of spontaneity but the freedom of choice." And then he goes on to declare, in the words of Schopenhauer, the latter view to be "the only clearly defined, solid and decisive ground on which to stake what is called the freedom of the will; so that you cannot quit it without lapsing into hazy, vacillating explanations, behind which shuffling half-thought seeks shelter."²

Kant does his best to clear his ethics of everything anthropological, eudaemonistic or empirical. The impulses of human nature, by the fact of their being empirical, are, of course, morally indifferent. They become positively evil when they oppose the demands of our rational nature. But the conflict between duty and inclination is still more deeply rooted. Duty must be done for duty's sake, and for the sake of nothing else. Virtue is present only when an act is done *against* our inclinations. Kant's formula, therefore, would be: "I should do something because I desire something else." Paradoxical as this sounds, Martineau, the Common Sense Philosopher, says the same thing in other

¹ *Study of Religion*, II, p. 280.

² *Ibid.*, II, p. 310.

words: "Unless there is a *conflict* of motives there can be no morality," is his formula. When an impulse, however noble, is alone present in the mind, with no lower motive which is prudentially, eudaemonistically, stronger to struggle against—no morality. And as, on the other hand, he denies the possibility that any man can be impelled towards any course by very high and very low motives combined, the views of Kant and Martineau therefore overlap.

The dictates of reason must be addressed to all rational beings as such. For example, "Always act on a maxim which thou canst will to be a law to all humanity." This law, however, is too formal and too empty. There can be no volition in general, which at once loses its rational character by being particularized. The imperative requires you to realize something, but it gives you nothing to realize. This Categorical Imperative is therefore a trifle too subjective. The individual is the source and standard of all moral good. The rational man as such cannot err or vary. An erring conscience is a chimera. The anarchist of the Vaillant type, the St. Simonian, the anti-vivisectionist, the prohibitionist, the ascetic and conscientious Thug—each assures us that his course of action is so noble as to be worthy of becoming the rule for all humanity. We can even imagine a case where, besides landing us in monstrosities, it cannot possibly be applied. For example, a pessimist who having brooded over the woes of mankind, is at last driven, out of pure love for his fellow-creatures, unselfishly to procure out of his own means the few thousand tons of dynamite necessary to blow up this planet. Any one who doubts the probability of such proposals can easily convince himself by but spending a few half hours in the perusal of the anarchistic masterpieces of the Bakounin and John Most type. Now all of Kant's conditions are here fulfilled. Pure rationality, battling against an illusory inclination towards life, and

universal inclination at that, coupled with great unselfishness, and no possible expectation of eudaemonistic consequence. And yet the rule of Kant fails! because there *is no humanity left* who are to adopt this self-sacrificing precedent into a universal law.

Martineau's principle, on the contrary, while it is formal, is yet not empty. The springs of action fill it. It is a mediation between abstract formalism and empiricism in the grosser sense as equivalent to self-love.

III

MARTINEAU'S FUNDAMENTAL POSTULATES

Metaphysical Assumptions

Ethics will vary according to the generating idea or method out of which they spring. If the primary assumptions are taken from the scene around man, we will have an unpsychological system. This may be of two kinds, according as we begin with assuming the real Eternal Cause of all phenomena—God—and thence descend into the human world: when we get a Metaphysical system of Morals. Or, assuming only the totality of perceptible phenomena, we have a physical system. If we begin with God, we follow Spinoza; if from Nature, we are within sight of Comte.

But if the primary assumptions are taken from within, and we proceed by light of self-knowledge to interpret what is objective, we have a psychological system of ethics. The vast difference between the two coming to this: that when self-consciousness is resorted to as the primary oracle, an assurance is obtained, and is carried out into the scheme of things, of a free preferential power; but when the external whole is first interrogated, it affords no means of detecting such a power, and thus there is no room for the conditions

of moral agency, viz., a well-grounded distinction of better and worse, a real authority in the former, and a free personality to give or to refuse its rights.

In short, ethics may pursue their course, and construct their body of doctrine either from the moral sentiments outwards into the system of the world, or from the system of the world inwards to the moral sentiments. The psychologic method will give us a volitional theory of nature: the unpsychologic, a naturalistic theory of volition. The one will admit the doctrine of proper responsibility; the other will altogether deny it.

It must not, however, be supposed that the above ethical conditions are fulfilled by merely crossing over into psychological territory. Egoistic doctrine (Fichte's Idealism) also misses them; as without objective conditions, the idea of Duty involves the contradiction of one part of Self, imposing obligations on another part. In order to reach a real ground of obligation, it is further necessary that our psychology should be dualistic in its results; recognizing as in its doctrine of perception, so in its doctrine of conscience, both a Self and an other than Self. In perception, it is Self and Nature; in morals, it is Self and God. The essence of a psychological method therefore is (1) that it assumes reflective self-knowledge to be possible, and gives it precedence in ethical relations over other knowledge; and (2) it believes in the inner experiences, not only as appearances within us, but where they offer testimony, as witnesses of realities without us. This is asking no more than is conceded to the testimony of perception, on whose simple testimony we believe in both the perceived object and the perceiving self. If then we can but state accurately the essence of the moral sentiments, and find the propositions which they assume, we reach the last resorts of theoretic truth.

There are, however, several ethical systems with a psychological starting point that deny the independence of the moral sentiments; which claim that the moral sentiments are only derived from other categories, either the sensitive, the cognitive or the admiring capacities of mind. These systems of Bentham, Price and Shaftesbury are therefore *Hetero-psychological*. While the scheme whose author refuses to evolve the moral from the unmoral phenomena of our psychical nature, and who invites the conscience to declare *its own psychology* will arrive at a system of *Idio-psychological Ethics*.

Ethical Facts

The fundamental basis of ethics is according to Martineau the broad fact that men have a consciousness of a better and worse in human beings and affairs, and approve and disapprove accordingly. We will develop the contents of this fact.

1. As to the *objects* of the moral judgment. The objects of our moral judgments are *persons* exclusively, and not things; and where the latter apparently is the case, it is only a figurative transference of the term, Things in themselves are wholly characterless; we neither applaud a gold mine, nor blame the destructive storm. Furthermore, all psychologists are agreed that it is always the *inner spring of action* which determines our praise or blame. Morality is internal.

We do not begin with estimating others and then transfer the habit to ourselves; nor is the Moral Sense a social product. In the face of the general consensus of English psychological opinion, Martineau maintains that the moral quality can be known in the first instance only by internal self-consciousness. The value of other men's actions would be unmeaning to us, were not the thing signified already

familiar to us by our own inner experience. Men judge others by themselves. An Idio-psychological method *eo ipso* implies this main principle of ethics. This does not however mean that a solitary human being could have moral estimates. Just as without material things around us we should not detect the Ego of Sense; so, without persons before us, we would never detect the Ego of Conscience.

Nor must that inner spring of action be a *spontaneity*; for a force simply as such is no moral object at all, no matter whether we put it inside the organism or outside. The moral life dwells exclusively in the *voluntary* sphere, and but for that would have no existence. A volitional state differs from a spontaneous state in having *two* impulses present, while the former has only one. This plurality would however still present no case for moral judgment were it not a plurality of *simultaneous possibilities*; *simultaneous*, i. e., co-present to the mind, not successive, or otherwise the first to enter would have a clear stage; *possibilities*, i. e. either of them must be *possible* to us, it must depend *upon us* in relation to them and not *upon them* in relation to each other which of them we follow. Moral judgment credits the Ego with a selecting power between two possibilities, and stands or falls with this.

2. As to the *mode* of moral judgment. The one great condition which raises the spontaneous into self-conscious life is this: the simultaneous presence of two springs whose difference amounts to strife, which check and exclude each other. At that moment we are immediately sensible of a contrast between them, that one is higher and worthier than the other. If the first pair of impulses that compete for our will disclose their relative worth by simply assuming that attitude, it is the same with the rest. Each in turn, entering with a rival, reveals its comparative place and falls into line of appointed order. And when all the natural springs of

action have had their mutual play, there will be resources within us for forming an entire scale of principles exhibiting the gradations of ethical rank. The sensibility of the mind to the gradation of this scale is what we call Conscience—the knowledge with one's self of the better and worse. Conscience then is the critical perception we have of the relative authority of our several springs of action.

Having stated Martineau's fundamental assumptions, in his own words mostly, we shall now try to bring out the meaning and validity of his position by examining more closely several points that suggest themselves to us.

The broad fundamental ethical fact is "that we have an irresistible tendency to approve and disapprove." What is this *tendency*? Is it an impulse? a spring of action? an instinct? What is it psychologically? Is it unanalyzable? But tendency implies an activity rather than a passivity. Is it conscious of its results? All such and a host of other questions Martineau leaves unanswered. A clearer psychological circumscription, narrowing the "unanalyzable" down to the smallest limits, would not have been out of place.

When we are affected by two springs of action, we have, in addition to their degree of intensity, an immediate apprehension and intuition as to their moral worth, which it is equally impossible to escape as to explain. In answer to the objection that this is not philosophy but mystery, Martineau replies that it is *both*: "and the mystery is no more than in perception, where we are immediately introduced to an *other* than ourselves that gives us what we feel. In the act of Conscience, we are immediately introduced to a *higher* than ourselves. The externality in the one case, the authority in the other, the causality in both, are known upon exactly the same terms and carry the same guarantee of their authority."¹ This is clear as far as the fundamental and first principle of any

¹ Martineau, *Study of Religion*, II, 28.

science or art can be clear and free from difficulties. Knowing that the ultimate principle must be unanalyzable, we do not object to the mystery part of it, provided we will not have "unanalyzable" steps in our process flung at us at the turning of every corner.

Spontaneities he excludes from the moral sphere altogether. "We might have a sense of the difference between its indulgence and its arrest; we might make our own state more or less an object of attention; yet might pronounce upon it no moral sentence, as a force simply as such is no moral object at all."¹ But, "when we have a sense of the difference between its indulgence and its arrest, when our state is more or less an object of attention," is such a tendency of mind merely a force, and is it as "foreign to ethics as the gravitation of the stars or the instincts of a lunatic?" Is this not a glaring *petitio principii*? Are we not soon overcome by the suspicion that this novel broadening of the term force is only made because Martineau's system requires that morality consist in the comparison of two springs of action? In the *spontaneous* state we may even have a "sense of the difference between its indulgence and its arrest." In a *volitional* we must have not less than two impulses. "Endeavor to do away with this duality; thin off the second object till it melts into the surrounding field; still there remains this surrounding field itself; and you at least have before you as the condition of judgment, *your mind with the given spring of action, and your mind without it.*"² Both a spontaneity and a volition are defined by practically the same terms. And on such a vanishing difference Martineau tells us depends the transition from the unmoral to the moral! Again, are spontaneous actions really characterless? With psychological writers it has passed into an axiom, even got hold of by common sense since time imme-

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II., 33.

² *Ibid.*, II, 36.

morial, that just unpremeditated spontaneities show one's true unvarnished character. Granted, we cannot be as harsh in judging an impulse as we are in judging a cool-blooded, premediated piece of deviltry, but surely we do judge it, we approve or disapprove of it, with certain allowances. Curiously enough, right at the end of this very treatise Martineau finds fault with Bentham's scale because it includes only intentional actions, *excluding impulses from the sphere of morals altogether*. "We never hesitate," Martineau naïvely adds, "to judge men by the mental language impulse puts forth. The mere unintentional overflow of good affections, the unconscious tact of a pure and gentle heart, are regarded with spontaneous respect and approbation by all observers."¹

Moral judgment is essentially comparative or preferential. Not "*x* is right" but "*x* is better than *y*." He claims that the springs immediately disclose their moral worth. To oppose dogmatic denial to dogmatic assertion will not bring us very far. We will rather suggest some difficulties and contradictions in his own statement of the case. In the following instances he virtually admits that a conflict of tendencies is not capable of immediately, and by a mere glance at their face, disclosing their moral value. (Perhaps because we are not yet moralized enough?) "Nothing is so hard as to determine the controversy of the claims of love of gain and the passions of antipathy, fear and resentment."² He has to bring up intricate reasonings and ingenious arguments at last to decide the relative superiority of the former. In other words, he leaves off for a while reading the hierarchial scale revealed to him instantly and spontaneously by the mere appearance of the springs of fear and ambition side by side, and he has to appeal to Clarke's Reason to help him out of the difficulty. Here are one or two more instances. "Nor can we perhaps assign to Fear simply as such a uniform

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 275.

² *Ibid.*, p. 194.

value relative to other springs of action."¹ Fears, he tells us, cannot be assigned their relative moral rank by the above mystic-philosophical unanalyzable and inexplicable method, "without reference to the worth of the objects feared." A fuller consideration of this last clause with its wide-reaching consequences will be presented later on. When the incentives of wonder and admiration compete in the mind of the individual, "there seems to be no reason for assigning to either impulse an authority superior to the other."² "To determine the right limits between instinct and indulgence in the case of the sensual appetites is the business of another department of ethics, viz., that which after settlement of the rank of motives estimates the consequences of actions."³ According to the above then we can imagine a case where over-indulgence *especially in the sensual appetites*, is blamable not because the conscience instantly allows the flash of a Higher Lantern to illumine it, which illumination immediately reveals its true character, but because *physiology* may find it convenient to subsume it under this or the other category in its classification.

Is the conflict of springs precisely the form in which all questions of morals come up? Take the example given by Martineau, of a child "not above the seductions of the jam-closet, finding himself alone in that too trying place, making hurried inroads upon the sweetmeats within tempting reach; but has scarcely sucked the traces from his fingers, before he is ready to sink into the earth with compunction, well knowing that the appetite he has indulged in is meaner than the integrity he has violated." By this, "a fair representative of our moral experience,"⁴ Martineau means to imply that this highly sensitive child, (by internal evidence we learn that it is a boy) knows he has done wrong as surely and as

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, p. 198.

² *Ibid.*, p. 218.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

soon as he knows that twice two are four, not five. But we confess that if we could imagine ourselves in that position, before sinking into the earth with shame we would retort upon Martineau with his own rule, that in order to be liable to moral judgment at all, the two springs must be *simultaneous, conflicting possibilities* and not *successive* occurrences.¹ Here the child was immediately drawn to the sweetmeats. The conflicting reflection of violated integrity makes its appearance only *after* he had sucked the traces from his fingers. And as the dynamics of human beings (especially in their infantile years) are as foreign to ethics as the gravitation of the stars, the action of this child, though a typical example of moral experience in the opinion of Dr. Martineau, falls according to his own premises outside the ethical field of vision.

But to return to the point under consideration, does not primary moral judgment consist in *form*, rather in comparing the character which proceeds on the higher principle with the other proceeding on the lower principle? Not, Has the tendency to pity more claim upon me than the desire for food; but, Should not I be selfish, if I let the other hungrier child go without food that I may eat? The judgment is passed on the *character* which yields itself to the higher or lower spring of action, not on the spring of action itself. Conscience is then the intuitive discernment of a higher altitude of character as a whole in relation to the moral emergency of the moment. The difference between the two views is this: that, although many of our actions are single-motived, it is seldom that only two rival springs of action are compared. And these two can often not be understood when torn out of connection with the whole character. Give two springs of action to a soldier and he will decide them one way; give the identical two springs to a clergyman, for

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 37.

example, and the opposite course may be right for him. Dr. Martineau's defence, to be given later, that they have different segments of the moral scale in view, only strengthens our position. Two springs torn out of context will give us just as false and perverted an image of a moral ego as two keys torn out of a piano will give of that instrument, or two sentences torn out of a book of the treatise; or as two colors out of the seven of whiteness; with the only difference that our moral eye has, according to our author, a thirteen-colored prism. Judgment is here passed upon a living character, not upon a mere "spring of action."

IV

MARTINEAU'S DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF HIS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

Conscience by each separate verdict we have seen pronounces one impulse to be higher than another; and that other in its turn to have superior moral claims upon us than a third. If we were to tabulate these moral decisions we will be in possession of a moral scale of impulses. But before this is possible, we require a classified psychological order of our springs of action. And here, considering how little has been done in this department of psychology; how, for example, the subject of the emotions in most psychologies is nothing but a list of names with no necessary *idea* binding them into one, with no arrangement according to some principle, be that principle genetic, historical or otherwise; such a task is no easy matter to undertake. But this highly precarious and difficult scheme does not frighten Martineau away from testing his theory. He is sure he is on the right track. It is not more difficult, he says, than the production

of a code of external duties for the infinitely varied exigencies of life. Besides, it is no new undertaking. It has very often been attempted. Plato attempted it when he distributed the inward source of action into *ἐπιθυμία*, *θυμός* and *νοῦς* with *δικαιοσύνη* as the controlling power. Aristotle classifies moral action to be due to either *instinctive impulses* or *rational election*. And in modern philosophy among others, Malebranche insists on the *proportionate perfection* of what he calls inclinations and affections, and makes "Love for their law of order" the equivalent of all virtue—two ideas, both of which Martineau takes hold of, the first as we have seen and shall soon illustrate; the other in his working out Reverence as the supreme motive in his moral scale. In recent time, Dugald Stewart presents us for the first time with what Martineau calls "the rudiments of a philosophical arrangement; because he recognizes, on the one hand, the difference between animal impulse and open-eyed desire, and on the other, between the *dynamical* principles (appetites, desires, affections) and the *regulative* action of self-love and conscience."¹ Stewart does not, however, turn these important hints to any practical use. Martineau's classification is only a consistent carrying out of his suggestions.

Psychological Order of Impulses

Man is conscious before he is self-conscious. *Primary* principles are those which, while presupposing consciousness, urge him in the way of unreflecting instinct. *Secondaries* are those occurring in a self-conscious state, in which an end gratifying to some feeling is held in view. A primary, being an instinctive impulse, "is devoid of all intention and excludes all choice, *i. e.*, preferential judgment between two possibilities."² Of the primaries, we have *first* the Propensions (appetites of food and sex, tendency to physical activ-

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 135.

² *Ibid*, p. 140.

ity) that carry us simply out of ourselves we know not whither. *Secondly*, the Passions that repel us from our uncongenials, be they things or persons. Towards an object of natural aversion immediately before us, we feel Antipathy; towards that which menaces us with evil, we look with Fear; towards that which has just hurt us, we experience Anger. *Thirdly*, the Affections draw us to our congenials, who can be only persons unequal or equal—the Parental and Social Affections, Compassion. *Fourthly*, the Sentiments pass out by aspiration towards what is higher than ourselves, whether recognized as personal or not. Wonder, asking for causality, affording a ground for the intellectual in our nature; Admiration, directed upon beauty, affording ground for an Aesthetic; and Reverence, looking up to transcendent Goodness, giving rise to a doctrine of Ethics and of Faith.

The *Secondaries*, which are only the primary impulses over again become *ends*, give rise to the following: Among the Propensions, to Love of Pleasure (Voluptuousness), Money, Power. The primary Passions of Fear, Antipathy and Anger, are transformed into Malice, Vindictiveness and Suspiciousness. The primary Affections, parental and social, become Sentimentality. And the primary Sentiments of Wonder, Admiration and Reverence are on a self-conscious stage turned into Self-culture, Aestheticism and Interest in Religion. In addition to these radical elements of human activity, there are various ulterior compounds which require some dexterity to resolve them into their original components; e. g., Emulation is a compound of the Love of Power with the Love of Praise.

Moral Order of Springs of Action

Martineau now examines these springs in “blocks of two,” in order to discover their moral standing in a scale of impulses. The Secondary Passions, being absolutely evil,

constituting whatever there is diabolic in us, must be cast out of consideration altogether. Even Love of Ease and Pleasure stands higher than these. The Secondary Propensions again occupy a lower place than their Primaries. For it is surely meaner to eat for the palate's sake, than to appease simple hunger. The third propension, Spontaneous Activity, being an animal function, stands above the appetites, which are only organic functions. This Propension in its secondary form, Love of Power, Love of Money, ranks still higher. Fear, Antipathy, Resentment, when legitimate ought not to be set aside out of considerations of gain, or for the sake of any sentimental display of pseudo-sympathetic feelings. • To Love of Power, Ambition, Love of Liberty, we must assign, again, a higher position than to the Passions. The nation that holds its resentful feelings under control of its sense of power, is less blamable than that which brings them under no rational restraint. The Primary Affections precede in rank the Secondary Sentiments—Love of Culture, Amateurship as well as the Primary Sentiments of Wonder and Admiration. The keenness and universal scope of Compassion place it before parental and social duties. While the supreme place is given to Reverence, or the Love of Goodness, divine or human.

The results of our survey give us the following table of the Springs of Action:

LOWEST

1. *Secondary Passions*.—Censoriousness, Vindictiveness and Suspiciousness.
2. *Secondary Organic Propensions*.—Love of Ease and Sensual Pleasure.
3. *Primary Organic Propension*.—Appetites.
4. *Primary Animal Propension*.—Spontaneous Action (unselective).

5. *Love of Gain* (reflective derivative from Appetite).
6. *Secondary Affections* (sentimental indulgence of sympathetic feelings).
7. *Primary Passions*.—Antipathy, Fear, Resentment.
8. *Causal Energy*.—Love of Power; Ambition; Love of Liberty.
9. *Secondary Sentiments*.—Love of Culture.
10. *Primary Sentiments of Wonder and Admiration*.
11. *Primary Affections*.—Parental and Social; with (approximately) Generosity and Gratitude.
12. *Primary Affection of Compassion*.
13. *Primary Sentiment of Reverence*.

HIGHEST

And the resulting rule of moral conduct, the exact definition of Right and Wrong, shapes itself into the following form: *Every action is Right which in the presence of a lower principle follows a higher; Every action is Wrong which in the presence of a higher principle follows a lower.*

Nature of Moral Authority

After reviewing some inadequate accounts of this "simple feeling admitting of little analysis or explanation," where we get a masterly refutation of Bentham's charge of ipse dixitism against any appeal to a moral faculty, he shows that if the Utilitarian once admits the Moral Sense *to be there*, in the mind, it must be adequate to report to us right and wrong without an appeal to our self-love. And if the Utilitarian doubts the veracity of this one human faculty, he is driven into the suicidal position of doubting the other faculties as well. He likewise sets aside the views of Paley, Hegel, Leslie Stephen and Herbert Spencer. Kant's Categorical Imperative, "So act that the principles of your will might serve as a system of universal legislation," comes nearer his view.

This view, prevailingly adopted by German writers on ethics, states that from the individual a certain homage is due to the essence of humanity at large. Dr. Martineau embodies this with a concrete semi-personal reality not larger only, but higher than ourselves. Moral authority is ultimately then not subjective, but objective; not vested in ideas, but residing in a Person.

The whole theory, is as far as we have seen, therefore not disconnected from theological considerations. From theology he derives two fundamental postulates: Free Will and a Moral Governor who directs conscience what to reveal. This position of Martineau turns out to be therefore as *hetero*-psychological or, which means the same thing, as *derivative* (in contradistinction to *idio*-psychological, *independent*) as the Ethics of a Plato or a Spinoza.

He rejects Kant's Autonomy of the Will over non-rational inclinations. "If the sense of Authority means anything, it means the discernment of something higher than we. And as 'we' are persons, this higher something can only be another person, greater, higher and of deeper insight." Does this, must this, imply more than Kant makes it to mean? Must we make that "we" to mean persons? Why not content ourselves with Kant to call it "non-rational inclinations?" In that case "higher than we" means only what his own *independent* ethics would lead us to expect, "A subjective conscience" he tells us, "is impossible." Moral preference between two impulses, in so far as it is moral, is one commanded by God. The validity of his whole system we are repeatedly told stands or falls with the validity of his theological assumptions.¹ And thus we see before our own eyes the *idio*-psychological system of ethics metamorphosed into (what in Italian we would call an *iddio*-psychological, or *anglice*) a *theo*-psychological system of ethics.

¹ Cf. *infra*, VI, Religion and Reverence.

In addition to the difficulties of the intuitional position, Martineau therefore succeeds in bringing over to his side most of the difficulties of the theological view, with very few of the advantages of a thorough-going theological ethics. Martineau leaves us entirely in the dark whether that other will be moral or non-moral. The latter offends common sense. The former is an argument in a circle. He omits to explain the rationale of the ethics of the Supreme Being. This is especially to be deplored in this case, as few philosophical writers on ethics are so anthropomorphic and anthropopathic as is Dr. Martineau.¹ E. g. "Christianity finds God sympathizing with the struggles of tempted souls, and so identifying Himself with a conflict from which in His own essence He might remain aloof. We must therefore in some way *carry up the contrasted light and shade of moral distinctions into His own inmost being.*"² Martineau's sanctions for morality are therefore just as little satisfactory as those of the utilitarian schools. To the Theist, his sanction is unnecessary; to the non-Theist, unconvincing.

Reverence and Conscience

What is Reverence and what are its implications? The simple obligation of following one spring of action rather than the other, the duty of following it might be revealed without involving that positive homage of the heart, that joyful humility in its outward presence—Reverence. Reverence is not an inherent element of this incentive or that, a phenomenon taken by itself, but a uniform relation hovering over their combinations and constituting them a hierarchy into which as phenomena they could never construct themselves. It surrounds the ethical phenomena of our consciousness with the air of *sacredness*.

This, however, distributes the sentiment of Reverence al

¹ Cf., *Mind*, Vol, X, pp. 434-5.

² *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 92.

along the scale, making its appearance whenever two instincts strive for mastery in the moral field. Yet we have seen it counted as only one of them, and that as the crowning point of the scale. But a feeling, unlike a localized physical object, may occupy two psychological places at once. As most readers are puzzled to know exactly what this last phrase means, Martineau refers us to a similar difficulty which Plato has left us in putting the "Idea of the Good" at one time as the highest term of the *εἶδη*, at another as lifted above them all, yet concerned with them all. The reader, however, is not much wiser than before. Here is a plain explanation of *obscurum per obscurius*.

Reverence is for Martineau one, or rather the one bridge thrown over the chasm separating Psychology from [faintly theological] Religion. Reverence is the telescope enabling man to behold the Infinite seemingly at arm's length. "This sentiment anticipates the ultimate tendency of our nature's advance along the unswerving lines of conscience; and shoots forward to the distance—infinite, alas! for us—where the interval between the curve of the natural and the asymptote of the spiritual life is evanescent. It is truly intent, therefore, upon the perfected aim and final beatification of our moral nature, in its assimilation to God. It is unparalleled and supreme as a motive. The wild enthusiasms of a generation that has lost its guide and gropes in the dark for some hand to lead it; that tries all competitors for worship, now science, now art, now order, now progress, arbitrary equality or equally arbitrary hierarchy, force of intellect or force of dynamite; nay, that sinks so low as to bend the knee to the passing *Zeitgeist*, while turning the back to the consensus of all ages; sufficiently shows the helplessness of minds whose Reverence is set afloat without a compass, and with the eternal stars shut out."¹

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 231.

When two incompatible impulses appear in our consciousness and contest the field we are immediately sensible of a contrast between them, to describe which we must draw upon quite a separate phraseology: higher, worthier. No analysis or research is required; the claims are decided by a glance at their face. These cases, repeated with variations of the terms compared, gather together fresh judgments in adequate numbers, and organize themselves into a *conscience*, able to reflect upon moral relations as a system under the one idea of obligation or right.

Conscience is therefore for him not a store-house of dogmatic moral maxims, but a *perceptive* faculty. And what it perceives is the existence of a graded moral scale of active principles or incentives. He escapes some of the traditional difficulties of a conscience, setting out with a mass of "thou shalt not's." Conscience does not make authority, it only reveals it.

But cannot the whole fundamental procedure be questioned? When two springs strive there always arises a third—namely the incentive of Reverence. This stepping in just at the decisive moment is another "unanalyzable" of Dr. Martineau's long list of these ultimate facts; which long list seems most provokingly to defy Sir William Hamilton's Law of Parsimony. But Martineau ought to see that by distributing Reverence along the whole scale—just as, let us say, the brain-tissue in the human frame, besides having its supreme place in the cranium, is distributed along the whole vertebral column in the spinal cord—he does away with the view that strife of springs is a cardinal point in a theory of moral worth. For of what nature and mystic potency is that Reverence? If the better of the two impulses is the higher, then what is the use of adding Reverence to its aid? The fact of its being the better, the worthier, *eo ipso*, carries its authority with it, unless we are to hold the *worthi-*

ness of the higher impulse, its moral *authority* over us, *Reverence* and *Conscience* to be all instantaneous manifestations that are at bottom identical. Then most, or a great many at least, of these distinctions of our author, extending over dozens and dozens of pages, are only questions of names. He is viewing the assumed fundamental fact of moral consciousness from so many points of view, in order that he may find in it a place for all the terms of our moral vocabulary.

Again, if authority is an unanalyzable feeling, and conscience is the sensibility of the mind to such feelings, conscience is a feeling of a feeling—subjective with a vengeance! “No one who feels the authority at all can at the same time believe that it is an egoistic peculiarity.” But unfortunately people who feel moral authority just as keenly as Martineau, yet do believe it in the sense of the latter to be nothing but an illusion. The same is true in the free-will controversy. Determinists (like Hommel) admit that they have a feeling of Liberty while and at the very moment that they are writing against it.

Relativity of Conscience

But the real difficulty which lies at the threshold of his doctrine that conscience is a shifting rule, varying with the various stages of civilization, with various climates, etc., neither he nor Bishop Butler satisfactorily settles. Critical study of common-sense morality does not give anything like the uniformity that Martineau pretends. Nor considered in the light of Evolution, of historical development can we consider the verdict of common sense as final on the question of ethical truth or falsehood—a fact admitted even by men like Green, and Martineau himself. Critical examination of Intuitive Morality as held by the common sense of civilized mankind will moreover disclose error, uncertainty. These can only be removed by the construction of an ethical sys-

tem—a truth which is evidently admitted by Martineau, otherwise he would not have attempted such a task.

Let us first hear what Martineau himself says on the Relativity of Conscience, and how far his formula meets this *crux philosophorum*. He recognizes a *double* relativity.

1. "The conscience implanted in our breast is not God's personal and absolute ideal, by which we are tried: but His communicated and *relative* ideal so far as He has permitted it to dawn upon us."¹ This again turns out to be what we may call only a *sub-relative* reflection of the former. "How far is that image itself what it might have been? Is it the pure vision which God has rendered possible for us? No, it is dwarfed and stained by the self-incurred perversions of our sight, and the specks and films of many an unfaithfulness."

2. Now for the other relativity displayed among different men. "Notwithstanding the uniformity of their moral nature, men differ in their moral judgments. The whole scale of inner principles is open to survey only to the ripest mind; and to be perfect in its appreciation is to have exhausted the permutations of human experience. Still, however limited the range of our moral consciousness, it would lead us to the same verdicts, had we all the same segment of the series, under our cognizance. If all our moral judgments are *preferential*, two terms must always be present as the objects of comparison. Ask two persons the value of B: if one measures it by A as a standard, and the other by C, their answers will not agree."²

The first relativity spoken of, which makes our ideal of character (that very same which reverence surrounds with such *sacredness*) to be but a bespecked and befilmed third-hand copy of the eternal right, robs for most readers at least Martineau's fundamental belief in the *reality* (*Sein* as opposed to *Schein*) of virtue, of all its grandeur and effective-

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 120.

² *Ibid.*, p. 61.

ness. We will not continue our reflections on this point. They are likely to lead us, as they led Dr. Martineau, into language that, while admirably and strikingly original and fitting in a sermon, in a lecture, in a College Chapel address, or even in a treatise on Theological Apologetics, may have its legitimacy disputed in a scientific attempt at a Psychological Ethics. Here he approaches dangerously near to an idea worked out in a different way, of course, by Herbert Spencer—*absolute Ethics*; according to most authorities, not the least vulnerable point in the latter's ethical standpoint. Or, perhaps, it may be taken as a mere poetic transformation of the doctrine of the Fall. Indeed, there is at times, a pre-scientific (poetic) air in Martineau's argument, which, while attended with its disadvantages to the technical subtlety of the argument, will, of course, do very much towards popularizing this work among the non-professional, intelligent readers of the English-speaking world. There is nothing of Kant's reptilian and writhing sentence-building in the book—nothing of Hegel's tantalizing jargon. He always places the Abelian harp of Truth in a position to give voice to the fairest and most bewitching sounds. His style has the brilliancy of a Cardinal Newman together with a quality that the latter does not possess—*color* on the page. But on the other hand, his ingenious metaphors seem to come in at the pinch of the argument. Just at the critical moment, when in the ordinary novel a bugle-horn is sounded or a headless rider appears, we here get a beautiful trope or allegory. But rhetoric sometimes confuses a clear thought instead of clearing it up. And whenever Martineau leaves the *terra firma* of solid arguments for the illusive mirages of poetry, he generally mystifies instead of clearing up, and very often attains to the giddy heights of unintelligibility. He very forcibly reminds us of Heliogabalus, one of the Pratorian Emperors, who, at a banquet, would sometimes

have the ceiling suddenly open, and a rain of roses, violets, and lilies would come down upon the heads of his guests. At first they would be ravished with delight, but the shower did not cease; flowers upon flowers continued to fall, until the next day his poor guests were dragged forth dead from their flowery grave. A similar fate seems to be in store for the reader of Martineau, during the first few times at least. Our eyes are blinded by the dazzling color of his figures, and our poor heads turn and topple and are made dizzy by the abysmal plunges and the aerial flights of his winged soul. In fact, it takes a special determination to resist his charms, not be carried away by his eloquence.

Now as to the second sort of Relativity. If each man's conscience reveals the law of duty, then the Indian, the pioneer with his lynch-law, must be as transparent mediums for the divine light as the most pious saint or profound moral philosopher. Paley says: "Historians and travelers tell us that there is scarcely a vice which has not in some age or country been approved, scarcely a virtue which has not been condemned; in one country it is right for children to support their aged parents, in another to despatch them; theft was rewarded in Sparta; etc." If conscience is to be the judge, where and in whom is that conscience to be found? He first defines virtuous acts to be such which conscience approves, and then makes conscience the faculty which determines and approves virtuous acts. Again notice his difference between an exact and an obtuse conscience. One has a greater degree of critical perception than another. "The former, like a fine ear for music, magnifies, as it were, the intervals between tone and tone; the latter, accustomed only to ruder instruments, passes without notice a thousand things quite out of tune and requires strong discords in order to feel a jar."¹ This is, of course, a very beautiful simile. But

¹*Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 53.

it seems upon closer inspection not to be free from dangerous suggestions. Why should we consider the music of the European as the standard rather than the music of the Tartar? This can only be answered dogmatically; very much as John Stuart Mill decides the controversy about Socrates and the pig. But even overlooking the fact that the quality of having a fine ethical "ear," which magnifies intervals, is at another place described as a fault ("conscientiousness is apt to have too narrow a range and to be too nice for the broad estimates of the working world"¹), is it not a well-known fact that the uncivilized very often have a clearer perception of the moral law than the civilized? Compare the atrocities committed by the Spaniards, then at the height of Christian European civilization, upon the inoffensive Indians. That in man, the years of childhood are more likely to give a purer and nobler moral instinct, Dr. Martineau himself admits.

His ingenious plea that the course of their experience brings into prominence different parts of the scale of impulses to different people, will not altogether settle the difficulty. If we urge that the Indian is not capable of judging as the cultured European, that really undermines the rock on which Intuitional Ethics is built. It would mean that we either subscribe to some form of Perfectionism; or we make morality depend upon something else which *makes* it, *calls* it forth step by step; any claim or explaining away to the contrary notwithstanding; such being then only a question of terms. And this is a position that Dr. Martineau all along has been attacking, and always will attack. Not much stronger is the reply that the moral verdicts of different men would agree had they been in the same circumstances; for that can only mean that a moral *law* is the height of absurdity. It likewise makes the moral law depend on surroundings, on policy of rulers, etc.

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory* II, 59.

"They would agree if they would view the object to be judged from the same point." If we survey the views of those who systematically devote serious thought to moral questions, we see that systematic ethical reflection tends to group individuals into "schools." Sidgwick, for instance, has put himself into Martineau's point of view when examining Intuitionism. Yet he does not subscribe to an Idiopsychological Ethics. "The whole scale is open only to the ripest minds." He unmakes his whole Theory of Conscience. For granted each possesses a conscience; but if that is inaccurate, it is valueless or worse than valueless. If Dr. Martineau, Sidgwick, Leslie Stephen, Spencer, J. S. Mill, and T. H. Green differ, who are surely among "the ripest minds," then an impartial jury may possibly bring in the verdict that Martineau's scale will not afford much practical guidance to the mass of humanity.

His method of accounting how the various instincts "fill in" is rather peculiar. "Not until the simple consciousness of higher and lower is repeated and has gathered fresh judgments in adequate numbers, do they organize themselves into a conscience." In that case we prefer the position of Spencer, who spreads the development through ages. Conscience is in the above made to wait upon experience. The simple consciousness of higher and lower is not a verdict of conscience, since conscience is as yet non-existent. Conscience, according to this, is therefore nothing but the arrangement or enumeration into a scale of the value of impulses—in a certain sense, an affair of dilletantism. He indeed, seems to fear the idea of development, no matter in what sense or under what aspect. But surely a doctrine to which, in some of its elements, Perfectionism (T. H. Green) holds fast, does not necessarily savor of materialism. He himself admits that the Hartleyan Psychology has traced the *development* of certain mental phenomena. But,

on the other hand he tells us, because pity is instinctive in us now, it follows that suffering is in the plan of things; "for what meaning could pity have in a world where suffering was not meant to be?"¹ While we may share Martineau's belief that the mental and moral cannot be ultimately derived from the material and non-moral, yet it is going too much against contemporary science to hold that our complete psychic nature—its passions, emotions, sentiments, with their various and divers ramifications in their manifold complexity—was all of a sudden snowed down into this planet; showing no signs of its swaddling-clothes age, with no chance to outgrow one by one its infantile garments; to allow no broadening of the sympathies, at least; and all this but to be enabled to make use of the argument that sorrow is a *natural, perpetual* and *predetermined* element of discipline!

In spite, however, of such casual remarks he, up to a certain point, seems to believe, as we shall see later, in the education and development of conscience. In this again he falls in line with the Scottish school—Reid, Dugald Stewart and Whewell. Indeed, to go back for a moment, Stewart's explanation of the variability of conscience, mentioned above, really concedes to the other side all they contend for; viz., an appreciable dependence of moral judgments and norms upon the respective sum-totals of social conditions; or in other words, that morality is developed. "The power of these adventitious causes—example and association," Stewart says, "is so great that there is perhaps no particular practice which we may not be trained to approve of or to condemn; but wherever this happens, the operation of these causes supposes us already in possession of some faculty by which we are capable of bestowing approbation or blame."²

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 151.

² *Philosophy of Active and Moral Powers*, VI, 299.

And this is also *the sum and substance of Martineau's argument* against Bentham, Jas. Mill, and Herbert Spencer. This argument is all very nice, says Jodl,¹ but it leaves the whole question just as open as before. For even Stewart's opponents of course admit that the mere possibility of moral phenomena depends upon a certain capability on the part of the man which *must be assumed*; upon a certain peculiar power of discrimination and thought which manifests itself amid all historical and climatic changes. Nor do they deny that ethical phenomena constitute a fundamental difference and superiority of the human being over *the animal*. But they are not ready to admit that we are thereby forced to resort to an original intuitive faculty, and consider that as an ultimate element of our psychic organization.

And lastly, it seems that Martineau has misapplied the whole doctrine of Relativity; that is, he misses the whole problem. He applies it to dispositions, to "springs" of conduct. He explains it by the fact that different segments are held in view. "When, for instance, a discussion arises whether we ought to approve of the conduct of Florence Nightingale, who went into original fields of humane enterprise at the cost of home blessings; those who condemn her will regard it as an abandonment of family affections; while the latter will perceive in it the sacrifice of self at the bidding of pity and love." But does not the whole doctrine of relativity apply to *ends*? Is not that form of it referred to when we mention the various ethnological, historical or even sectional aberrations of conscience. The Fijian is restless, unless he has murdered somebody. Now, in the mind of this Fijian the moral judgment concerning murder, mirrors itself in the conflict between the absence of Organic Propension, Love of Ease, and we will say Causal Energy (Love of Power.) Therefore, murder is to him right. Far otherwise

¹ *Geschichte der Ethik*, II, 415, 594.

would the moral verdict be in that very same Fijian's mind if he were aware instead of a conflict between Causal Energy and Reverence for human life. But if we remember that it is relativity of ends that is meant by that term, this is not explaining relativity away. It is only translating it into Martineau's own terms, and affirming it the stronger. Why does not the Fijian subsume murder under the spring of Reverence, and why does he subsume it under the spring of Causal Energy? Why do some nations lack certain higher springs possessed by others? And if they do possess them, why do they not know how to apply them? Why is B at one place or time compared with A, and at another place or time with C? His tautological answer only propounds the question on the inner side with the same force as it exists on the outer side. By thus translating the problem into his own peculiar phraseology, while we are enabled to explain therewith certain irregularities in occidental life, his solution utterly fails when applied with greater logical rigor to the moral phenomena in history and anthropology.

Scale of Springs of Action

Martineau establishes on a solid basis the general difference between the highest conduct and the morally ignoble. He hardly explains the difference between conduct that is definitely sinful and conduct that is only wanting in the highest elements. Men are either saints or sinners. If a man refuses to become a martyr for any cause, or tells a lie involving the lives of others, he is alike despicable. The theory is further liable to criticism that the conflict of motives is rarely so simple as it is here assumed; that he does not allow for the frequent case where a man is impelled in one direction by a high and lower motive combined, and in the opposite by a motive of rank intermediate between the two. This point raised by Sidgwick is answered "that

a higher and lower motive cannot subsist together"—an answer that seems to be contrary to common experience.

Turning to the arrangement in the scale, we notice the secondary Passions thrown out *in limine*. As for the total exclusion of Vindictiveness, although the feelings with which any one of us might with self-satisfaction and self-approbation treat a Cæsar Borgia or an Ivan the Terrible approach very nearly the vindictive, we will not quarrel with Dr. Martineau. But is Suspiciousness or Censoriousness really a devilish quality in man? Do we account a *suspicious* man who "if he catches cold makes his will; if his children have the measles, he cannot expect them all to recover,"¹ etc., as a bestial character? The tendency so fashionable at the present day, to "pessimize" and "ironize" which are nothing but transformations of the secondary passions, may be Mephistophelian—but surely not devilish; and there is all the difference in the world between the two terms, of course. Irony is even considered by educators like the Hegelian Rosenkranz to be the culminating point of urbanity—the highest accomplishment of the true gentleman. Is Swift, in so far as he is Swift, no human being at all?

The whole list of the passions and affections is very much cramped. Some German psychologists fill volumes in giving descriptive lists of our passions and affections. The Conjugal Affections are altogether omitted, while place is left for *Wonder* as a motive. In this scale we search in vain for a hint how to decide such *positive* questions as the "Second Half of the Later Decalogue" treats of; how to decide the prohibition to steal, to commit lewdness, or gambling. It would require a great deal of manipulation to bring *all* such questions under the one single head Reverence. Concerning Compound Feelings "there is no speech nor language," they are judged at a glance. If so, why not assign for them

¹*Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 175.

a place in the scale, and thus bring this so much nearer perfection?

The very effort to reduce these judgments to a system, forcibly brings home to us how very vague and varying they are, and how well-nigh impossible a task it is to assign a definite and constant ethical value to each different kind of motive in this general way. Martineau very often is forced to resort to Reason for determining the relative place of two springs. And if the Hedonistic Calculus of Bentham has been found after long and careful examination to be woefully wanting, likewise will we see Dr. Martineau's Calculus to be at best, but a foreshadowing of what perhaps, if at all, is going to be.

At the close of this section we may observe the love of order in this whole scheme—an inheritance, undoubtedly, from German university life. Here we get a scale of no more nor less than twelve "Categories" of Moral Impulse; of no more nor less than four classes with exactly three impulses each; in which class the third is, in some way, the result or at least the equivalent of the first two.

Whatever may be brought up against the Scale from a consequential standpoint, we will take up after examining his Theory of Prudence.

V

THEORY OF PRUDENCE

In order to bring out more clearly the real nature of our moral constitution we are next shown what it excludes. From *moral* judgment he descriminates *prudential* judgment; he shows how they are at once contrasted and related. The objects of prudential judgment are the *effects* of actions upon us. We here ask about the result whether it is pleas-

ant to *tend to*. Prudence therefore is an affair of *foresight*; moral judgment of *insight*. The two do not stand in the same relation to experience. For want of experience we may blunder, but not *sin*. Conscience is given: Prudence is found. Prudence, furthermore, may be defined as the self-surrender to the strongest impulse: Duty is self-surrender to the highest. But the dictates of prudence may be considerably modified by co-existing moral judgment. The advantages of yielding to a vehement impulse may be counteracted by consequences entailed by the order of the world and the sentiments of mankind, including our own. Martineau next attempts to prove that these consequences are all the creations of our *moral constitution*. (To have successfully proven this in regard to the consequences arising from the order of the world, physiological penalties of nature and others, would of course mean nothing more or less than a complete theodicy in the ethical field, a theistic reshaping of the Spencerian ethical formula and its embodiment in the idiopsychological scheme.) Prudence in a world morally constituted, we are further told, differs from what it else would be, and has new elements of pain to deal with. A moral consciousness, like every other, cannot fail to be attended by joys and sorrows of its own; and the good man would be a fool were he other than good. The prudential order, moreover, is the *individual* order variable with different persons; while the moral scale is identical and constant for all men; or, Platonically speaking, the good (like the true) is one; the evil (like the false) is manifold.

Merit and Demerit

When the moral and the prudential orders of impulses conflict, the vehemence of the temptation will be proportional to the extent of the discrepancy between the two scales. The demerit or disgrace of wrong-doing become

greater as the temptation is less. A murder committed for the sake of a pair of shoes, indicates a far deeper depravity than homicide from passion or revenge. But as a rule the extent of ethical deflection will have a general correspondence with the force of temptation; and the force of temptation operates not to increase, but to relieve the shade of guilt. Or, more precisely, *Where the discrepancy is greatest between the moral and the prudential order of principles, the guilt is least; but where the discrepancy is least, the sin is greatest.* The disagreement can however cease, by either of them surrendering and merging into the other. If the prudential absorbs the other, the *man* disappears and the absolutism of self becomes diabolic. While by the absorption of the prudential scale into the moral, the human is apotheosized into the angelic.

This formula for measuring the respective merit and demerit of an action is in practical life of almost as great importance as the general formula for moral action given above. Let us therefore examine it more minutely. We are told, "that the vehemence of the temptation is proportional to the extent of the discrepancy between the scales." We doubt the truth of this premise; and a little reflection will show us that just the reverse is the case. The vehemence of the temptation is *inversely* proportioned to the extent of the discrepancy between the scales. To illustrate: Smith is jealous of Jones. If not for Jones, he could attain to a certain position of honor, trust or eminence. Two courses soon offer themselves to Smith, the cause of jealousy remaining the same. He can attain his object by conniving and abetting at the murder or financial ruin of Jones; and, on the other hand, an occasion is at hand when he has a chance, out of mere personal spite, to blackball Jones at a political or social society of which he is a member. Now assuming the discrepancy between the prudential and the

moral scales in the case of conspiracy against life or fortune to be three times as great as the discrepancy in the second instance, we may safely assert that, roughly speaking, nine out of ten persons would shrink from committing the murder, while feeling no scruples to blackball their rival. Thus we see that the vehemence of the temptation will not be proportioned to the extent of the discrepancy between the two scales. The discrepancy between the moral and prudential orders in the matter of stealing a paltry sum will to an ordinary person be very great; the strength of the prudential scale being very slight. Yet as a rule he will feel no temptation whatsoever of appropriating it. But substitute a million dollars, where the strength of the prudential order increases alarmingly, and compared with the first the discrepancy is reduced to a minimum, it is *then* that the temptation to many persons becomes well-nigh irresistible.

Sidgwick requires a fundamental rule in morals to fulfill four conditions: 1. To be stated in clear and precise terms; 2. really self-evident; 3. not conflicting with any other truth; and 4. supported by a complete consensus of experts. The rule concerning Merit and Demerit can hardly stand the test, even were we to admit the validity and tenability of the views so far advanced. We have seen, and we will see more of it later on, that Martineau's (or anybody else's scale, for that matter) is not invulnerable. But be that as it may. We will assume the absolute validity of the *moral* scale. But what is a classified *prudential order* of impulses? Martineau very often mentions the term. But what is it? Does it apply to single actions or to a life-time? and according to what law? Who is to prepare it for us? Shall we evolve one out of Bentham's data? And as the Prudential Scale is an *individual* scale "variable with different persons,"¹ (to say nothing of nations, ages, etc.), as it is "a *personal* deflection

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 77.

from the universal order," a collection of the "egoistic forces of propensity"—how is a *constant* prudential scale at all thinkable according to Martineau? It is a contradiction in terms. He has introduced a variable into his equation, which each man can value as he pleases—which will fit everybody, and therefore fit nobody. In reality, moral valuation is practically impossible, and if possible, valueless because too hazy. He bestows, therefore, upon Merit, Demerit, Guilt, etc., an individualistic, subjective meaning. In fact, he robs these words of their contents no less than do Spencer or Stephen. Whether the rule is supported by a complete consensus of experts, whether this beautiful ethical paradox is really self-evident, not conflicting with any other truth, it is needless to investigate.

We will now examine some of the other terms of Dr. Martineau's ethical vocabulary in the light of the Theory of Prudence; how far they are modified by the admission of such a canon.

What is a Spring of Action?

1. It is a "personal phenomenon of a free agent issued by the mind, having its dynamic sources there."¹ Martineau adopts Jas. Mill's analysis of the word "action" into 1. the sentiments whence it springs, 2. the muscular movements in which it visibly consists, 3. the consequences in which it issues. Of these, cut off the first, and the other two lose their moral quality. 2. Again an inner spring of action may be a *mere spontaneity* under whose instigation we are *propelled* forward by a want toward it knows not what.² This gives us two accounts of a spring.

a. A personal phenomenon, the expression of a free agent.

b. A mere spontaneity, common to man with lunatics and animals.

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 24.

² *Ibid.*, p. 282.

The spring of action having its dynamic source in the mind or will of a self-conscious agent, and being therefore the self-identification of himself with that act requires a different ethical valuation from the second, a mere propulsion. And to slur the difference between the two, considering them both ethically sound, is the great sin of Dr. Martineau; by overseeing which he has to a great extent built his ethical foundations on sand. The result will differ according to what is really understood by a spring of action—whether instincts, hereditary tendencies, habits due to varying dispositions; in short, mere physiological factors in human existence; or, as the free adoption by the agent of a certain course of conduct, an “open-eyed desire.” But he all along talks of the “strife,” “authority” and “conflict” of springs indiscriminately with the “forces” and the “dynamics” of a spring of action. At one time he considers a spring of action by itself, at another in its relation to the mind. A spring of action is therefore made to mean two things—a tendency and the identification of a free agent with that tendency.¹

a. Let us first examine a spring of action in the sense of motive, intention, volition, end in view, and find out exactly what it includes and what it excludes. An “action,” says Martineau, “is a word of complex meaning, taking in the whole process from the first stir of origination in the agent’s mind to the last pulsation of visible effect in the world.”² Here we have three elements recognized, among them the visible effects in the world. A volition implies an *end in view*, is, therefore, purposive, or at least semi-purposive. On this depends the transition from the non-moral to the moral, we were told. What, therefore, is meant by an

¹ Cf. Dyde’s, “Idiopsychological Ethics,” *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. XXII, 138.

² *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 25.

act being purposive, or an agent having an end in view? This at least is involved, that the agent conceives beforehand of consequences which will naturally follow from his intended act, and is willing to incur them. The phrase "end in view" unless you make it mean the foreseen leading consequences of an act, is meaningless. These essential results of the action are then in fact regarded as really involved in the nature of the desire. At another place¹ we are given a more explicit elucidation of this point: "The intention comprises all that the agent *designs*, all that for the sake of which and that in spite of which we do the action. The *motive* comprises only the former. The term *motive* may be used synonymously with terms emphasizing the immediate energy out of which a chosen action issues; e. g., spring of action, impulse, incentive, propension, passion, affection; as well as the 'effects desired.' For when effects *are* desired, they are so in virtue of some particular affection in which, rather than in themselves, lies that which we approve or disapprove. Thus admitting all this, we still have to look inward for that which moves forward. The intention includes the motive. For purposes of ethical classification these terms are rather awkward, as they are not mutually exclusive. We, therefore, take the intention to pieces and separate among the designed effects those which plead for the act from those which plead against it. The former constitute the *motive*, the spring whose want urges us on. The latter constitute the resistance offered by some other affection which will be hurt by our surrender. In thus reducing 'motive' and 'intention' as previously used to two competing springs of action and by letting the judgment turn upon the relation between the two, we make all the contents a function of the result."

This view is fraught with very far-reaching consequences

¹ *Mind*, Vol. 10, 633.

to his anti-utilitarian and idiopsychological position, which we will regard later. "The computation of consequences is already more or less involved in the preference of this or that spring of action; for in proportion as the springs are self-conscious, they contemplate their own effects, and judgment upon the effects is included in our judgment of the disposition."¹

b. The impulsive actions are those springs of action that are merely spontaneities, without choice, motive, intention or end in view. But as the truth is that we can no more approve an instinct than approve the dynamics of animals, the great question is why did not Dr. Martineau exclude them from the field of ethics altogether; or at least assign to them a sub-ethical position? For it is this distinction between impulse and volition that is taken to differentiate primary from the secondary springs of action. And while, as we have seen above, Martineau excludes spontaneities from moral judgment altogether, he later runs away from this fundamental distinction, and in the classification of the springs, he assigns to the primary springs a much *higher* moral value than to the self-conscious, deliberate and volitional springs. To prove that his definition of primaries is identical with that of spontaneity, we need but turn to any place in the *Types of Ethical Theory* where primaries are spoken of. "Those tendencies which urge us in the way of unreflecting instinct to appropriate objects or natural expression." "A primary is an instinctive impulse which spontaneously institutes means to an end not preconceived. It differs from habit in being devoid of all *intention*; it excludes all *choice*."² "The mode of action to which they lead us is perfectly analogous to that which we attribute to the lower animals."³ One condition of moral judgment, however, is that the spring be not a mere spontaneity, but a volition which co

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 275.

² *Ibid.*, II, 140.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

ipso "undeniably implies an end in view." In addition there must be a simultaneous possibility of two or more volitions. In view of the above we see that tried in Dr. Martineau's own court, he having instructed the witnesses to suit himself, the trial reveals contradictory conclusions on the most cardinal points. According to his own definition we must drive the primaries out of doors "hanging on the skirts" of the spontaneities. And as this portion of our psychic life cannot be overlooked, he would logically have only one course open for him, and that a suicidal one to his position, to refer it altogether to the utilitarian canon of consequences.

But are those springs which Dr. Martineau would have us fit into the frame of the primaries really spontaneities? Do they not also have an end in view? Are not the primaries of hunger, fear, anger, to a certain point purposive?

Let us see. The twelve primary principles yield certain satisfactions to the self-conscious nature. These satisfactions may themselves become *ends*. These are the secondary principles aiming to produce certain *states of ourselves*. They are the self-conscious counterparts of the primaries. Martineau tells us in a note¹ (which is calculated to undo a great deal of mischief) that it is not reserved for the secondary springs to give us the first idea of a self. "To this a plurality of primaries are competent; *then* we cannot but be aware of them as objects, and ourselves as subjects of more or less attentive thought; only what we know about them is their immediate relative intensity and relative worth, and not their future sensible effects if indulged." According to his conditions² this is not yet enough to elevate it from the class of the spontaneities into that of volitions. But be that as it may. To say that a man knows the "immediate relative intensity" of certain springs means absolutely nothing, if not the conception which the individual has of the actualization.

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II., 166.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 35, 36.

If a man knows the *relative strength* of the anger that at this moment possesses him, that is identical with saying that he knows in a general way the relative correspondence of the consequences. It is only two ways of expressing the same phenomenon. If I know that the anger I feel at this moment has greater relative intensity than yesterday's, that can only mean that just at that very second of time there is bound up with such knowledge, a knowledge that the effects to-day will be more intense than yesterday; either the pitch of the voice will be more raised, my color will be redder, the article that I break will be shattered into more fragments, etc.

Just as misleading is his account of fear in the case of a carousal in a plague-tainted city.¹ Here the impulse is made to include the following various things: the knowledge of the terrible danger of the plague, a desire to shield oneself from it, the deliberation as to the means of so best doing, and the choice of drunken carouse and ribald song to drown its fears. All these things are developed from a primary instinct, a mere spontaneity! An end in view is thus tacitly implied in Martineau's examples. In order that a tendency should enter the moral field at all, there must be comparison amounting to strife. This strife means the differencing of one end in view from another. And although Martineau has all along objected to those psychologists who would resolve all activity into desire, *i. e.*, the idea of a pleasure, he towards the end of his work, in giving a brief and exact *résumé* of his method tells us that under impulses, "our nature is *propelled* forward by a want towards it knows not what; the relief of that want imparts a pleasure, which, if there be memory, adds itself as an idea to the spring of action. What before was a movement of *need*, now becomes a movement of *desire*."² Martineau, therefore, in one portion

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 197.

² *Ibid.*, II, 282. Compare with *ibid.*, p. 136.

practically admits that an ethical rule, no matter how general, implies a reference to general results, and that it is not possible to know an incentive or tendency of our nature without knowing as well the results of its issuing in an overt act.

The Scale from a Prudential Standpoint

Martineau disregards consequences altogether in the assignment to the various springs of their respective moral places. As soon as two principles complete, we are now again told we instantly and immediately know their moral values. That this very moral value is afterwards made to depend on a utilitarian condition, *frequency* of appearance, does not seem to disturb him in the least. But *can* we assign a definite and constant ethical value to each different kind of motive in a general way, without reference, to the particular circumstances under which it has arisen, the *extent* of indulgence that it demands, and the consequence to which the indulgence would lead in any particular case?

"Do not eat till you are hungry," and "beware of fancying you *want* because you like," are not intuitional truths but hygienic rules, based upon experience and fear of consequences. In the case of the sea captain¹ who, out of indolence, neglects his soundings and endangers the lives of the passengers, we do not blame him because we intuitively see Fear stand higher than Love of Ease (that ease may have been well earned after some hard work), but because of the serious consequences that his neglect may entail. If Martineau had been true to himself he would have analyzed it by dividing the effects of his action into the motive, ease, and those over and above the motive, respect for life, etc. This would not have done violence to the better and more consistent portions of his work, and would have saved the Scale above all else from the fantastic atmosphere surrounding it.

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II., 197.

Who can decide whether aside from their consequences Fear stands higher morally than the tendency to Spontaneous Activity? Neither is Fear a prophetic premonition—(a double unanalyzable!). Otherwise, Spencer's child would know beforehand that fire burns, and would not have to endure the pain to have that quality of combustion taught it on the inductive method. We condemn sentimentality in a parent, because such a procedure invariably spoils the child. That famous boy in the jam-closet is ready to sink into the earth, because he has a more than "prophetic premonition" of his scolding mother, not because he invariably knows that the appetite he has indulged in is meaner than the integrity he has violated(!). Imagine that very same lad ill-treat a negro child, for example, in the South. He will not sink into the earth, because no shower of blows will necessarily and inscrutably follow upon such course of conduct.

Fear, Antipathy, Anger—"all these appear to me obviously to *go before* any experimental knowledge of the harmful, though doubtless the same feelings extend themselves to any new objects that disclose their repulsiveness only after experience." This may serve as a sample of the bizarre *experimental* psychology now and then to be met with in this work. Martineau does not seem to know that sights do not frighten infants.

"When the repulsion is felt towards persons, the meanness of surrendering it to money is still clearer." We condemn, we are told, a *mésalliance* for money between an Englishman and a Hindu woman. But deeper reflection tells us that it is not because Antipathy is higher than Love of Money, but because of the greed brought to light. To despise him for any other reason would merely be a display of what the Germans call *Kochlervorurtheile*, provincial and narrow-minded prejudices, the sooner got rid of the better. Marriage in the

abstract is neither a virtue nor a vice. It is the *miserliness* that we despise, though in the same action there may have also entered the broadest humanitarian cosmopolitanism, which aims to fuse the peoples together. Calculation of consequences also evidently enters when some place Ambition high, on account of the good results it brings about; while it is decried by others, for the "grossly selfish conception" of it among the lower minds who cannot resist its fascinations. We may safely say that if Envy, closely allied to Ambition, were to yield good results, it probably would occupy a higher place than it now holds. Dissatisfaction is by some called a virtue on account of the good results often following it.

To the man who has an antipathy to blood, Martineau says, "On no account swallow your disgust for money by entering the business of a butcher." He adds, however: "In practice the answer which we want is sure to be complicated by intrusive considerations; whether his need is very great, etc., etc.; but from a pure psychological comparison these accessories must be struck out."¹ Nobody can demonstrate the untenability of the idiopsychological position as plainly and as openly as its author does in this case. Psychological comparison will supply you with an answer altogether at variance and totally inapplicable to practice. But what we want to know is *not* what a being suspended in the air—or a solitary savage seated on a barren island, pulling his ideas to pieces—not what such would consider right, but what a man "in practice," where these intrusive accessories cannot be struck out ought to do in this case. Ergo, psychological comparison of two springs can never give us a working formula.

Another stepping outside of his fundamental position is instanced in the following: When the incentives of wonder

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 196.

and admiration are co-present in the individual, "there seems no reason for assigning to either impulse an authority superior to the other."¹ In regard to compassion he takes into account its keenness, its universal scope and its duration through life. "These three features sufficiently pronounce its superior authority to the *provisional* instinct of Parental Love, though the latter *during its season* must sometimes be imperative." Here the springs of action change places according to their relative intensity, according to their order of *strength* (not *worth*).

As to a few other peculiarities of the Scale. Does not Martineau contradict Common Sense in assigning to the passions when of the intensity, etc., which he designates by "primary," such a high moral value. The Proverbs of the Nations, the most living psychology, and, in fact, the only true "confessional of the human heart," have ever recognized them as containing a large non-moral element. We do not hold a man as responsible, one way or the other, for words spoken in anger. Even the Mohammedan Law considers the utterance "I divorce thee," of an angry husband to his wife, to be of no effect. Words spoken in grief are, according to the strictest theological interpretation, incapable of being considered as truly blasphemous. We confess we cannot comprehend how he can maintain that yielding one's self to instantaneous impulses should constitute such a greater degree of morality in the agent than yielding to the secondaries. Animals have no secondary instincts. Therefore for an animal there is at least a possibility for infinite perfection. Animals must, therefore, on no account degenerate into men by admitting the "special distinction of man," self-consciousness, "which has the effect of excluding moral differences and equalizing all incentives except in quantity."² We said "self-consciousness, the special distinction of man,"

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II., 218.

² *Ibid.*, 187.

not consciousness; because even a Positivist cat knows that she, and not her neighbor next door, is drinking the milk before her.

Whether a lower impulse should invariably yield to a higher one depends on the particular conditions and circumstances of the conflict. Lower motives have their legitimate places. They are generally, and often unduly so, driven from their place by the higher. Herbert Spencer only a few years ago accused the Americans of neglecting the physical side of their life and over-cultivating the intellectual, thus becoming a nation of soft-muscled men. When ease is almost altogether shortened, the struggle between love of ease and love of gain should be reinforced by a still higher motive, regard for health and the ultimate sufficiency for work. But for such a procedure our scale does not provide. At one place he attempts to face the difficulty. "If compassion be always a higher obligation than the love of gain or family affection, how can a man ever be justified in quitting his charities for his business or his home?" The answer he has left for this we will see to be no answer. "The limits within which the higher moral attitudes can be secured by a voluntary command of favoring circumstances are extremely narrow."¹ He then points out the failure of the monastic system and the danger of neglecting "relations human and divine." This is no answer in a case where the individual in doubt is meditating the creation of such relations. And besides, is not a man, in so far as he deliberately refuses to follow a higher call for the reasons given by Martineau, placing himself outside of ethics altogether? He is then acting according to prudence. He considers what it is pleasant to tend to. It is an affair of foresight, not of insight; a "wilful drooping of the inner eye." Here is a distinct desertion of the criterion it has taken him 266 pages to

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 268.

establish, for a principle foreign to him. He distinctly tells the inquirer after moral guidance, in such cases as are often decisive of the course of a lifetime—as, for example, choosing a profession—to act upon the lower impulse; because the consequences *might be* less pleasant to him on the thorny road of duty than on the other. But the slightest admission is fatal to the idea of the absoluteness of duty, as well as to the trustworthiness of his conception of it. If a man can disobey the scale of Moral Worth from the fear of *probable* ill-consequences which would ensue if following the higher motive; and is therefore bidden to take the other course, more pleasant indeed, but one which during his whole lifetime will largely prevent him from living out the *universal* order; how can Martineau require of that same man to recognize the authority of the same scale, when it will bid him in another case follow the motive which will *surely* bring him a greater amount of inconvenience than the opposite? Martineau thus justifies the man who, in the face of higher promptings, adopts that profession which places him in a position where he will have lower motives “flung upon him by circumstances.” To resort to such tests as capacity for work, probability of success, is to turn to utilitarian considerations with which Martineau cannot without self-contradiction and, we might almost say, self-annihilation, busy himself.

By this scale we might, therefore, with a tolerable amount of uncertainty, settle some of the minor conflicts of daily life. But if a serious question is raised we can only decide it by carrying it up for decision to the court of another principle. Thus the ultimate decisive comparison is not a comparison of motives primarily conflicting, but between the effects of different lines of conduct in relation to some ultimate end of action, which, whatever else it may be, is not idio-psychological. As far as the probability of the scale is concerned, it is very small indeed. Martineau himself regards it only as

tentative. In view of the false abstraction, one-sidedness, careful weighing of all the circumstances, and the ostrich-like circumspection to be met in its evolution, we are convinced that we do no injustice to the logical necessity with which each individual step is deduced, by placing the probability of each at five-tenths. Now raise five-tenths to the thirteenth power and we shall have an approximate estimate of the value of the whole—practically nothing.

It remains now only to regard once more the mutual relations of Prudence and Conscience in Martineau's system, and we will have completed our critical survey of this attempt at a solution of the eternal ethical *Weltfrage*.

We have seen how somehow or other Martineau supplements his Theory of Conscience by a Theory of Prudence. All those portions where the prudential sides of his theory are set forth, seem upon closer inspection very much like ill-digested, loose patches, inserted by an after-thought. The two sides of his system are nowhere welded together, not even skilfully dovetailed. We read, for instance: "The whole ground of ethical procedure consists in this: that we are sensible of a graduated scale of excellence among our natural principles quite distinct from the order of their intensity and irrespective of the range of their external effects." He, therefore, utterly excludes consequences and relegates them to the Canon of Rationality. Now the choice enjoined by that Canon must either be moral or non-moral. If the prudentially stronger is also the morally worthier, then it is as sacred as the rest of the scale, and the Canon of Consequences ought to have been expressly incorporated into the Canon of Character as of equal value with the latter. If not, why notice it as a *moral* element in the work at all?

All critics that had occasion to notice this work lament the fact that Martineau nowhere explains exactly what he means by his Canon of Rationality and what it is to include, its ex-

act relation to the other Canon. By Prudence he at one time means the joys that accrue to one, through being good; the effects of action *upon us* and for us. "We disapprove a reckless wasting of one's fortune because it betrays an insolent defiance of any higher claim. The whole temper implied by the question; 'Why may I not do as I like?' is altogether uncongenial with the reverential spirit and is therefore condemned as a boundless potential immorality."¹ Here he surely does not mean consequences in the broad sense. We are in fact led to believe that under Prudence he all along understands Egoistic Hedonism, a position from which Utilitarians of the recent schools recoil just as decidedly as does Martineau. But if Prudence means only prudence (in the narrow sense of the term), then why make such a fuss about it? It is an outgrown, obsolete standpoint; why make it almost equal to the Canon of Character? It then merely takes its place among the springs of action as Self-love; much like filial love includes prudence for the benefit of one's family. If Prudence is to be taken in the broader sense, then why confine its meaning to the effects of actions upon *us*? If consequences are elements in the moral scale, why speak slightly of them? His theory is a sort of Janus-faced creature. At one time he will tell us that Prudence has become moralized, is part and parcel of the Moral Canon. At another time he will tell us that in addition to the Canon of Character, there is the Canon of Consequences. "Ethics may be defined as the doctrine of human character," [not "conduct"]. In dealing with its problems it is impossible to remain within the limits of *mere self-interrogation*. The sentiments which we propose to investigate have regard to the character and actions of mankind; the fitness of which must depend on the internal springs whence they issue, but also on the external adaptation to the sphere of their dis-

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 128.

play.”¹ And again, “Even if self-consciousness did no more than introduce *regulated self-regard*, its office would be amply vindicated; for Egoism, after all, has its legitimate place in the system of right character.”² What does he mean by “after all”?

To conclude this chapter. After we have examined Martineau's structure, we find him much less anti-utilitarian than we at first were led to think. Throughout his book we are made to undergo see-saw views; at one time strictly intuitional, rather ascetic; at another time we hear regulated self-regard naively vindicated. At a few places Martineau's presentation even points to a union on a solid ground-work of the Utilitarian and Intuitional systems. Sidgwick at one single point tries to knot the two systems together. Without the assumption of either a religious sanction or the conception of a moral world-order, the postulate of Utilitarianism is inconceivable, he thinks. But Martineau's suggestions point toward a much more thorough-going union. Notice his distinction between Motive and Intention, quoted above, and how both systems receive recognition in this crucial point. Or the following: “Such a computation of consequences is already more or less involved in the preference of this or that spring of action. For, in proportion as the springs of action are self-conscious, they contemplate their own effects, and judgment upon them is included in our judgment of the disposition.”³ If admissions like these be pressed, they will result in the practical adoption of a consequential standpoint from a psychologic basis. And thus the work which at first sight and all along tries to galvanize and wake into life an old-fashioned system, ends up by practically saying (in the Preface and Introduction, which, as a rule, are written last) that it is impossible to find any workable criterion of the

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, I, 1, 2.

² *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 187.

³ *Types of Ethical Theory*, II, 275.

morality of actions without taking into consideration the sum-total of their consequences or effects.

Morality is after all what Aristotle, our Great Master in the Arts and Sciences, made it, a science of gradations among ends. The determination of the worth of the ends and their consequent gradations cannot be made from any capricious and purely subjective examination of abstract springs of action; but must find some other rational basis. "A purely speculative doctrine of ethics [one formed from self-interrogation *alone* with no reference to *external adaptation* to the sphere of their display] if such were possible, might involve us in judgments wholly false respecting actual persons and characters."¹ Conscience merely as something in us is unauthoritative and may be wicked. Vindictiveness is in us and yet not on that account worthy of unconditional obedience. It is Fichte's difficulty over again, to overcome which Schelling was forced to recognize the claims of the outer world. In an ethical, as well as in a metaphysical scheme, the cry of Archimedes for a *ποῦ στῶ* is forever making itself heard.

VI

RELIGION AND REVERENCE

Reverence for the Law itself, says Kant, can alone stimulate man to obey the Law. But this reverence is less of an emotion and more another intellectual aspect of it. In place of this respect for Formal Law we are given in the work under examination Reverence for Transcendant Goodness, which, interpreted rightly, means Reverence for Personality, Reverence for God.

At this point Ethics passes into Religion. We may, there-

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. I, 2.

fore, see the relation to each other that our author assigns to the two.

We have seen that the theory under consideration is not theological in its original conception, but that he superimposes Religion upon it. This is to be regretted. For while this superficial religious coloring gains him no friends in the theological camp, it is sure to call forth misunderstanding in the anti-theological school. One thing we may safely say, that his supposed religious basis has prevented and will prevent him from being adequately recognized on the Continent.

He holds with Kant that Ethics is the foundation of Religion. But the foundation is not the building, the origin is not the content and essence of the thing itself. Says a disciple, at any rate an enthusiastic pupil and admirer of Martineau: "The idea of a Supreme Being on whom man depends contains [Revelation aside] no information about man's moral nature, or the end of his conduct, or his specific duties and obligations. You cannot deduce from that idea the character of conscience or will; it does not supply you with a standard of morality; it does not show you in particular cases what you ought to do. It is an extraneous form, into which you pour the whole ethical content, be that content what it may. Morality is not a deduction from Theism, but Theism a superinduction upon morality. The idea of Supreme Being is not the *ratio cognoscendi* of morality. It may be the *ratio essendi*."¹

In the chapter "Why Ethics before Religion?" in his *Study of Religion*, Martineau remarks: "If we start from our own psychological experience alone, without assumption or speculation respecting the universe around, we meet there with ethical elements involving the idea or furnishing the rule of duty. This order of feeling does not wait for the conception of the universe as under Divine Administration; on the con-

¹ Schurman, *Ethical Import of Darwinism*, p. 14.

trary, it is the condition on which such teaching depends for its efficacy; and is present where no theological sequel is ever appended to it." An authority may be felt where it is not seen, felt as if it were the mandate of a Perfect Will. To the agent himself, conscience can serve as his oracle, though it be hid from him *who it is* that utters it. Ethics, therefore, has practical existence and operation prior to any explicit belief. "But if morals are secure of themselves and can dispense with religion, what function remains for it?"¹

In answer he takes up Kant's figure of the island. Ethics is that island, surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, where many a cloud-bank and rapidly-melting ice-field deceives the mariner with a vain show of lands now discovered; and while thus feeding him with empty hopes, involves him in adventures which he can never bring to a successful end. "Now it is possible for the soul to remain unaware of any relations beyond this circle; but when the moral eye loses the films of habit and attains to spiritual vision, the life of present duty reveals itself as an insular element, and ethics is brought face to face with the momentous question whether their supreme intimations are verifiable and their relations eternal."

"If this question is decided in the negative not only is the passage into religion cut off as illusory, but the retreat back within the shelter of simple authoritative morals is rendered impossible. Ethics must either perfect itself into religion or disintegrate into Hedonism. Should then Kant's great ocean either prove to be an inhospitable waste, or, defying our courage and skill to cross, refuse to tell us what sunnier lands and ampler skies may spread beyond, it will but remain for us to turn inland, and raise what fruits we can from our island's scanty soil."

"If the question is decided in the affirmative, the whole

¹*Study of Religion*, Vol. I., p. 16-30, "Why Ethics Before Religion?"

spirit and character of duty become transformed and enlarged. It becomes transformed. Before it was a sacred cloud without form or living feature which approached us and uttered a bidding as it passed; and we obeyed with reverence for we knew not what. *Now*, with the opening of the new heavens, a great redemption comes and converts the life of Duty into the life of Love. It is enlarged. By such identification with the all-originating Mind, it no less declares itself eternal than omnipresent; inherent in his essence and therefore objectively put forth and instituted by his will for the assimilation of dependent and growing spirits upon his own. This is surely no slight change; it makes a difference whether the conscience is listened to as the way-side notice of a village oracle or as a living voice from the sacarium of the universe."

To sum up: he seems to us to say, Religion must exist, otherwise Hedonism would be true. To preserve us from this calamity, after invoking all the saints of the Old Testament, New Testament and the Koran, he is even ready to connect Ethics with Religion. Just as for Kant, Religion must exist in order that virtue be rewarded with the proper share of happiness. Martineau argues as follows: Hedonism is absolutely wrong. It cannot be proven to be so if Ethics is self-sufficient without religious sanctions. Therefore, Religion must exist. While Kant's argument takes the following form: The virtuous ought to be happy. They cannot be happy unless there is another life, and unless God exists to reward the good and punish the evil. Therefore both God and a Future Life are proven to exist. Starting from two *contradictory self-evident* assumptions, they arrive at the same conclusions. It is therefore just as forced to speak of Martineau's system as religious in the real sense, as it would be to apply that term to Kant. In the systems of both there suddenly appears a *Deus ex machina*; in the one

to make virtue equivalent to happiness; in the other, to prevent happiness from being equivalent to virtue. Both treat the problem in a most unsatisfactory way. To the Theist, too little is given; to the non-Theist, too much is woven into the argument.

We will now stop to notice two new applications to which Martineau's Reverence of Personality lends itself.

The first application is one which strictly speaking would be a reshaping of his fundamental view, and perhaps an improvement on his methods. We will merely indicate it in one or two sentences; for the reason that it would require more time and thought to develop it than we could at present afford; and furthermore, because we are strictly speaking only expounding and criticising, but not developing and synthetizing. It is the following: Whatever I can reverence, is right. The malevolent passions I can never reverence, therefore never right. Towards my animal propensions, when no competitor disputes their sway, my respect is neutral; therefore they are neutral. Whenever two springs dispute, my respect goes towards the higher. Reverence is thus merely a *regulative* principle; and not a spring occupying two (or rather thirteen) psychological places, as we were told. This would be a new answer to the question, "Why must I follow the higher?" "Because Reverence, the regulative principle of your moral life, commands you." And then the whole difficulty would concentrate itself in only one point—the motivation and the "transcendental deduction" of the authority of Reverence. This procedure would also relieve Martineau from the charge of Wundt with taking *all* the ultimate principles for granted, as given in the simple fact of moral perception. It would moreover on an inductive basis unify and regulate the springs of action in their moral order.

Martineau's view has also great pedagogical importance. What a great factor Reverence towards a personality whom

you love and revere plays in the education of the individual (as well as the education of the human race) he does not seem fully to recognize in his *Types of Ethical Theory*. He makes amends for this error of omission in his *Study of Religion*. He there perceives that educational principle, now held by the most advanced thinkers on the subject of education, that truths as such do not influence the will. All the abstract teaching of religion and morality has very little tendency to make people either religious or moral. The force of personal example, the personal character of the teacher, must inspire the mind of the taught with affection and reverence. "For our true moral life and education we are dependent on the presence of some nature higher than our own. Among those who have had any deep moral history at all, there are probably few who, on looking back to the sources of their first high faith, do not see the sainted image of some companion or guide. We need the assurance that the moral differences we feel have their verification in reality, ere we commit ourselves fully to them. This is more than 'force of example.' The operation of example is mechanical only, this is spiritual. Example plays upon the tendency to imitation, the ascendancy of the greater soul over the less is won by touching the springs of reverence. Example acts downwards as well as upwards; this can only lift us above ourselves. Example operates *piecemeal* upon the habits, while the enthusiasm awakened by a loftier mind is a universal energy flooding the whole soul."¹

But all this, Martineau is right in claiming, can only be evoked by Reverence towards Personality. The faith of conscience must rest upon a realized Righteousness. We cannot present to children abstract and empty formulas, if we wish to bend their will to our liking. It must be Reverence or Love toward a Personality. Children, again, as

¹ *Study of Religion*, I, 16-30.

Landor felicitously puts it, "when you have related to them any story which has greatly interested them, ask immediately and impatiently, *Is it true?*" Reverence must therefore be for a Personality that is real, existing, and true—God.

VII

CONCLUSION

Dr. Martineau's treatise constitutes the only serious attempt which has been made in recent years to give a philosophical form to the ever-shifting tenets of popular intuitionism. And the fundamental postulates, metaphysical and ethical, to be met with in this work are clearly not in harmony with the chorus of ethical writers on English shores during the last fifteen years. The vast and suggestive ethical literature of recent years, which period was evidently an ethical "storm-center" and which includes such names as Sidgwick, Spencer, Stephen, T. H. Green, Janet, Wundt, Paulsen, Steinthal, Jodl and Höffding, has thereby been enriched with a work of no ephemeral standing and value in English ethical study. These two volumes represent the fruit of fifty years of constructive thinking on the subject of ethics. Here we meet a mind whose mental development is the reverse of that process which during the last half century has led so many young and promising minds into the camps of materialism and agnosticism. Educated in the empirical and determinist schools of Locke, Hartley, Priestley, Bentham and James Mill, he was strengthened into a dogmatic necessitarian by his literary and personal relations with the younger Mill. He has also waded through the works of the materialistic *coryphæi*, from Diderot to Feuerbach. He has even travelled the *Via Dolorosa* of Büchner, Moleschott and Carl Vogt. Yet by advancing study he is gradually forced to concede to

self-conscious mind, both as knowing and as willing, an autonomous function as unlike as possible to any growing aggregate of dissimilar experiences. This idea is widened in him by a study under Prof. Trendelenburg of Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Hegel. The progress of his thought is thus from a mechanical, determinist and utilitarian *Weltanschauung* to a theistic and moral view of the universe. He soon comes to see in the validity of the moral law the test-question of all philosophy. The unpsychological systems derive everything in man from his physical environment. They mostly regard his sense of freedom as an illusion, and empty, or pervert, the moral vocabulary—responsibility, guilt, merit, duty—of all their spiritual contents. They are therefore repugnant to his moral nature; not to speak at all of his having discovered the one-sidedness on which their whole structure is built. He abandons them. But although Dr. Martineau is a true child of Plato, the intuitions of the soul being to him real facts, just as much as the facts of observation—nay more, they being eternal verities—his foot has always remained planted on the solid ground of reality; knowing full well that without realism, idealism is too *unreal* for us; just as, without idealism, realism itself is only a meaningless and haphazard conglomeration of appearances.

The true method of ethics is essentially psychological; ethical consciousness is something absolutely distinct, and answers for itself. It is not something else in disguise. It is a new element in human life. He reached this position through experience; he had tried a lower beginning and failed. He had found the physical hypothesis of human nature untenable. Leslie Stephen's breaking away from the evolutionary ethics, as interpreted by Herbert Spencer, has taught us that even in "scientific" circles the belief is far from being universally prevalent that Spencer has given us the Open Sesame, unlocking to us the doors leading straight

into the very engine-chambers of our ethical world, there to behold the why and the how and the wherefore of every secret ethical spring, valve or pulley. And Mr. Spencer's own admission in the preface of his latest book as to the insufficiency of Evolution to solve the problems of ethics, gives increased importance to a work of Martineau's character, that attempts a recasting of the ethical dicta of Common Sense, still the reigning system of Great Britain and America.

This particular presentation does also much to remove the particular charge made against Intuitionism by Mr. Sidgwick in his *History of Ethics* :¹ "It must, I think, be admitted that the Intuitional School, down to the middle of the present century, had been developed with less care and consistency than might have been expected in its statement of the fundamental axioms or intuitively known premises of moral reasoning." He gives to the Intuitional theory as strong a position as can well be given it, by the aid of a clearer statement of the central problem, and by connecting it more definitely with ordinary thought. In spite of many shortcomings, in comparison with the stubbornly unprogressive and uncompromising Hedonism (which, somehow or other, always reminds us of that owlet of Coleridgian fame), it possesses great logical advantages. Ever since Mr. Spencer's admirable criticism of Utilitarianism, little has been so well done as Martineau's arraignment of that system, confined to one point though it be. But Utilitarianism is comparatively old. It has been before the public gaze for fully three generations. Every detail has been threshed over and over again, so that even all the chaff has been ground into the finest powder. Martineau subjects Spencer to the same treatment. And he does it with a moral enthusiasm, we might almost say moral fanaticism worthy of a Fichte. With all

¹ P. 224.

the power at his command, he proves to the reader that Darwin and Spencer have not *explained* ethics. He accepts Evolution as a statement of observed facts and their relations, but no juggling can for him transform material phenomena into phenomena of consciousness. Martineau shows that almost every one, who in the intoxication that a new revolutionary theory affords, proudly styled himself a materialist, now, like Häckel, at least resorts to a theory of an *Atomseele*. We are sure that these portions of his work, into a detailed account of which we cannot here enter, are bound to make a deep impression upon the thought of the next generation in this portion of the ethical field. There are various advantages to be derived from the substitution of a systematic study of ethics in the place of the crude theories of the Utilitarian School. For we, in a modern day, perfectly agree with Leslie Stephen that "the attempt to establish an absolute coincidence between virtue and happiness in ethics is what the attempt to square the circle or to discover perpetual motion is in geometry and mechanics." There is for us no alternative, other than to embrace either a scientific ethics, or one whose starting point, or animating principle at least, will be some modification of the Kantian Ethics.

The general impression that we carry away from this book is, that his is an ascetic delineation of duty. The theory that virtue is generated by happiness is one at variance with his character. But in spite of the sympathetic Stoicism of many, very many passages to be found in his work, and without openly and avowedly surrendering the belief in the innateness of moral ideas, he yet "after all" seems to recognize legitimate functions for pleasure and pain in ethical problems. Read alongside of this Sidgwick's confession, that "ever since John Stuart Mill, it has generally been held by Utilitarians that the moral dicta of Common Sense are on the whole trustworthy; direct reference being only made to Utilitarian

considerations in order to settle points upon which the verdict of Common Sense is found to be obscure and conflicting."¹ Even Spencer admits that the Intuitionist School does not disregard general consequences, only particular consequences. Now dismissing the question as to *origin* as irrelevant, we can see that the difference between Consequential ethics on the one hand, and the ethics of Intuition as represented by the Idiopsychological Ethics, is not really insurmountable. A reconciliation is possible. It will, we are sure, be attempted by those who feel the need for an ethical system that shall possess in addition to the fervor and independence of Martineau's, the logical necessity and scientific comprehensiveness of Mr. Sidgwick's treatise, for example.

As for the many, very many difficulties we brought up against the system, we are not sure that just as serious difficulties cannot be brought against any other system, Perfectionism, for example; or the system positing Social Good as an end. How can we determine, according to the latter, how far a man should practice self-denial; or how justify the expenditures of the moral rich as long as there is anyone starving in the universe? We have above compared him with the early English Intuitionists, with the Scottish School, and with Kant. We have seen that while he may share the disadvantages that their position entails, he has greatly improved the advantageous suggestions in their systems. Let us again place him for one moment alongside of Kant and Spencer. Kant will apply no induction whatsoever to moral data, nor will he consent in any way, however slight, to make moral laws dependent on an enquiry into the tendencies of actions. He does not provide for a conflict of duties, and his Conscience is forever unchangeable and incapable of development. Spencer, on the other hand, advocating a sort of utilitarian relativism, makes his Conscience

¹ *Methods of Ethics*, p. 456.

to be in a state of perpetual flux, altogether dependent on environment. He speaks of sub-human ethics. He dilutes the moral to such an extent that it loses all taste, either acidity or sweetness, of its own; being reduced to the insipidity of the useful. Disregarding Free Will as an illusion, he even regards mechanical action, when on the whole favoring the production of happiness, good. The business of Moral Science is to deduce from the laws of life what actions necessarily tend to produce happiness. In other words, Ethics becomes a department of Hygiene. While no one can dare doubt the assumptions of the Intuitional School—right and wrong—without being considered, by even a David Hume, as a “disingenuous disputant;” Spencer’s do not share such universal consent. He dogmatically assumes that “pleasure somewhere, at some time, to some being,” is the end of moral action. You are to be moral that you may be happy. But why must you be happy? Because pleasure is the condition under which alone life can continue. But, when pressed further, the final *invincible* step in the argument, *il faut vivre*, one must live, seems but naturally to evoke the Frenchman’s witty answer: *Je n’en vois pas la nécessité*. Between these two Martineau occupies what we may call the golden mean, combining both the Permanent element of Kant and the Expansiveness demanded by Spencer.

To sum up: just as John Stuart Mill, in bringing Utilitarianism up to the standard of his time by introducing a non-hedonistic qualification for the better distinguishing and valuing of pleasures—namely, Quality—practically forsook the position of a thorough-going and consistent Utilitarianism; so Martineau, by finding Quality insufficient and by burdening his ethical rule by additional provisos and modifications of Frequency, has shifted the ground on which he purports to stand. If Martineau’s book be typical of its class, Utili-

tarianism and Intuitionism are no longer going along on parallel lines. Whether this is merely the approach of an asymptote to an hyperbole, however near, yet forever infinitely distant from the point of contact, or whether they are soon to intersect, only the future can tell.

Meanwhile, we agree with Leslie Stephen, that it is fortunate that the moral progress of the world must not wait till an unimpeachable system of Ethics has been elaborated. The common sense of civilized countries hold all the principles on which ethics can be based in confusion.¹ The average, even cultured, layman may tell you in the course of an hour's conversation that he follows the right because it is the will of God, because it is reasonable, given in intuition, because it tends to universal benevolence or perfection, or because it leads to the survival of the species. But the philosopher must decide for one of them. And Martineau comes and tells us that Right, unless entering by the royal entry of Conscience, will refuse to creep up the back stairs of greediness and gain. But on closer investigation we have seen that while the work may be considered as an excellent *For-studie* to a certain aspect of Moral Science, we still have to await the arrival of an Œdipus to solve the riddle of the Ethical Sphinx. Martineau's solution is such only for men in sympathy with him, for such occupying his own metaphysical or religious standpoint. We cannot as yet possibly imagine any practical working formula in ethics that can satisfy both the ascetic and the advocate for the emancipation of the flesh; Shaftesbury and Schopenhauer; Spencer and John Henry Newman. Nor can we find any ethical truth accepted alike by conservatives and communists, Salvation Army men and radical Darwinians with their idea of the suppression of the weak. Much less can we find any thesis, combining truth and motive efficiency that is satisfactory to all. But

¹ William James, *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. I., 342, 348, 354.

happily a moral theory, as Green has pointed out, has little practical value to make men either moral or immoral, who were not so before their recognition of the theory. What is unconditionally required is the Good Will. There is nothing in the world beside it that can so without qualification be called good. The golden words towards the end of the Mosaic Scriptures are still our guide: "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."¹

¹ Deuteronomy xxx, 11-14.

VITA

I, Joseph Herman Hertz, was born on the 25th of September, 1872, in Rebrin, Hungary. My early education, secular and otherwise, is entirely due to my father's private tuition; never having attended any school before arriving in this country in 1884. Two years later I entered the College of the City of New York, graduating with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1891, and was awarded the Senior Gold Riggs Medal for English Composition. In the autumn of that year I entered the University Faculty of Philosophy in Columbia College, to pursue the study of Philosophy, Pedagogics, and Ethics, with Professor Butler and Dr. Hyslop. To both of these gentlemen I would here express my gratitude for the interest they have displayed in my work during the past three years. My clerical education I received at the Jewish Theological Seminary at New York City, taking my Rabbinical degree in June, 1894.

